Appendix Y

Agency Coordination Materials

Preferred Alternative and Mitigation Package

- · Addresses for copies furnished
- IDNR October 10, 2003
- USEPA, Region 5 September 29, 2003
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers September 25, 2003

Meeting Summaries

- I-69 Agency Meeting Attendance August 27, 2003
- Agency Review Meeting, Preferred Alternative and Mitigation Package August 27, 2003
- Bus Tour June 4-5, 2002
- MPO Review Meeting, Screening of Alternatives Discussion November 27, 2001
- Agency Review Meeting, Screening of Alternatives Discussion November 27, 2001
- Coordination Meeting with USEPA November 8, 2001
- Agency and MPO Review Meeting, Purpose and Need and Tiered EIS Coordination Discussions - June 5, 2001
- MPO Scoping Meeting February 23, 2000
- Agency Scoping Meeting February 3, 2000

Section 6(f)

National Park Service - August 27, 2003

Section 7 Consultation Under the Endangered Species Act

- USFWS August 22, 2003
- USFWS March 13, 2003
- IDNR February 26, 2003

Washington Variations

- IDNR, Division of Water August 13, 2003
- IDNR, Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology March 25, 2003
- USFWS March 14, 2003
- USEPA, Region 5 March 6, 2003
- USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service March 6, 2003
- USDA, Forest Service March 4, 2003

GIS

Indiana Geological Survey - May 5, 2003

Hybrid Alternative

USEPA, Region 5 - November 22, 2002

Bus Tour Comments

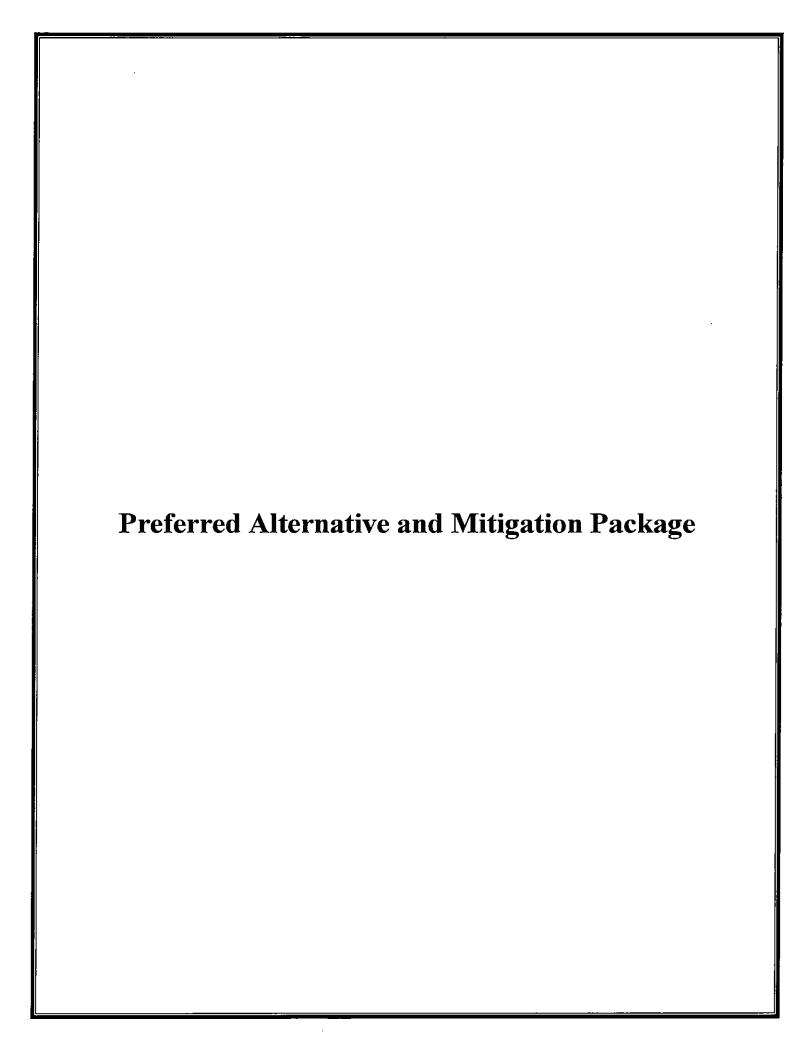
- USEPA, Region 5 July 16, 2002
- IDNR July 16, 2002
- USDA, Forest Service June 14, 2002

General Correspondence

- IDNR, Indiana Division of Fish and Wildlife February 26, 2003
- IDNR, Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology December 13, 2002
- IDNR, Division of Nature Preserves December 10, 2002
- USEPA, Region 5 November 8, 2002
- USFWS July 1, 2002
- USDA, Forest Service January 18, 2002
- IDNR, Division of Outdoor Recreation January 31, 1992

Purpose and Need Statement

- USDOT, United States Coast Guard July 11, 2001
- IDNR, Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology November 29, 2000
- USFWS October 16, 2000
- USDA, Forest Service October 10, 2000



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Addresses for Copies Furnished

Mr. Robert E. Dirks U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration 575 North Pennsylvania, Room 254 Indianapolis, Indiana 46204

Ms. Janice Osadczuk Chief, Division of Environment, Planning and Engineering Indiana Department of Transportation 100 North Senate Avenue, Room N755 Indianapolis, Indiana 46204-2228

Mr. Kevin Pierard, Chief Watersheds and Wetlands Branch U.S. Environmental Protection Agency 77 West Jackson Boulevard Chicago, Illinois 60604-3590 Attn: WW-16J

Mr. Kenneth Westlake, Chief Environmental Planning and Evaluation Branch U.S. Environmental Protection Agency 77 West Jackson Boulevard Chicago, Illinois 60604-3590 ATTN: B-19J



Indiana Department of Natural Resources

Frank O'Bannon, Governor John Goss, Director Executive Office Room W256 402 West Washington Street Indianapolis, IN 46204-2748 Telephone: (317) 232-4020 FAX: (317) 233-6811

October 10, 2003

Michael Grovak Bernardin, Lochmueller & Associates 6200 Vogel Road Evansville, IN 47715

RE: DNR # 9642-3, I-69 Evansville to Indianapolis Preferred Alternative and Mitigation Package

Dear Mr. Grovak:

The Indiana Department of Natural Resources has reviewed the above referenced package per your request and in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969. Department representatives also attended a meeting on August 27, 2003 regarding the package information. To avoid confusion and possibly the loss of coordination please send all information and requests for review to the department's Environmental Coordinator at 402 West Washington Street, Room W264, Indianapolis, IN 46204-2641. The following comments pertain to the information provided at the August meeting.

Regarding the preferred alternative information, the Department of Natural Resources has provided comments regarding the impacts of the various corridor alternatives in previous reviews and those comments are still valid.

The mitigation measures discussed in your document, I-69 Evansville to Indianapolis Study Preferred Alternative and Mitigation Package, are general in this Tier 1 phase of the project and we approve of the design considerations presented. We do have many more design alternatives that we feel should be investigated and incorporated into this document for the enhancement of fish and wildlife habitat and mitigation for unavoidable impacts to natural resources throughout this major road construction project though rural Indiana. We feel that the design of the road and incorporation of features to mitigate on-site impacts and enhancement of on-site habitat are extremely important measures, and should consider the overall impacts that a major highway through rural areas in southwest Indiana will have on all populations of fish and wildlife within the corridor.

We suggest that an additional section be added to this document to address wildlife impacts and the enhancement / mitigation measures. The Forest and Wetland Mitigation and Enhancement Plan presented at the meeting appears to be very preliminary at this point and also very site specific considering this is Tier 1 review. The department will reserve comments on this mitigation information until Tier 2 review of specific impacts. We would welcome coordination of these off-site mitigation possibilities at that time. It appears that there may be some viable mitigation alternatives but these must be investigated and coordinated further during Tier 2 review.

OCT 14 2003

As stated previously, we recommend that an additional section be added to the mitigation package that incorporates fish and wildlife survey, design alternatives, and habitat enhancement / mitigation measures into the entire I-69 project and at an on-site level. The following suggestions should be investigated for incorporation into the mitigation package.

- 1. We suggest a thorough review of the National Cooperative Highway Research Program (NCHRP) Synthesis 305, Interaction Between Roadways and Wildlife Ecology for Roadway Design Practices.
- 2. There is a unique opportunity for enhancing the state GIS resources for use in the location and design of I-69. We believe the I-69 project presents an opportunity to enhance the interconnectivity and access of geographic data between all state agencies and other data providers. We recommend acquiring the needed data and conduct geographic analysis to align and design the highway in a way that will: ensure optimum protection and enhancement of rare plants, key wildlife habitats, karst areas, wetlands, and other sensitive areas; ensure optimum connectivity between large habitat blocks; ensure uninterrupted daily and annual movement of wildlife; minimize the threat to invasive species entering and spreading through the highway corridor; and protect the viewsheds and noisesheds of key recreation and sensitive areas.
- 3. Where appropriate we believe INDOT should maximize the opportunity to enhance outdoor recreation opportunities in conjunction with the development of this highway through: the development of a greenway along the corridor for pedestrian use and bicycling, similar to projects we are aware of having been done in other states; designing underpasses and overpasses of intersecting roads to include bicycle lanes and sidewalks; playgrounds at rest areas; developing public access sites at crossings of canoe-friendly rivers and streams; and consulting local parks and recreation plans and incorporating local planning efforts for parks, recreation, and trail development into mitigation strategies.
- 4. Right-of way width through forested areas should either be reduced to minimize impacts on residential forest or widened to allow retention of a forested median. Your stated 3:1 ratio for unavoidable upland forest impacts appears adequate.
- 5. Incorporate design features into the highway that will minimize barriers to wildlife movement to include: overpasses, underpasses, bridge design, stream crossings, fences, and right-of-way vegetation management.
- 6. Design borrow pits to incorporate wetlands, irregular shorelines, and variable depths.
- 7. At appropriate stream crossings install in-stream fish habitat and enhance fish passage.
- 8. Follow the guidelines within the Karst Memorandum of Understanding and the Wetland Memorandum of Understanding as agreed upon by INDOT and DNR.

- 9. Provide on-site wildlife habitat through bridge designs for bird nesting or bat roosting.
- 10. Consider vegetation planting in the right-of-way for nesting birds and a mowing schedule that does not interfere with wildlife nesting schedules.
- 11. Use native species of woody and herbaceous vegetation for disturbed areas along the highway route.
- 12. Wildlife surveys to determine measures to enhance habitat and incorporate mitigation measures will be required throughout the corridor. We recommend that wildlife surveys be initiated as soon as possible for further use in Tier 2 planning.
- 13. We highly recommend that the following information regarding erosion control be taken into consideration during construction:

Pollutants associated with runoff can significantly impact surface waters during construction as well as following construction. Significant reductions in the discharge of pollutants to waters of the state and sensitive resource areas can be reduced by implementing appropriate stormwater quality measures and by establishing procedures that dictate how the project will be constructed. The selection of specific measures can be limited by watershed size, day-to-day construction activities, and the limitation of available land on which to construct appropriate measures. The ability to address stormwater quality on highway projects can be limited by the availability of land.

Procedural alternatives and land availability can significantly affect the overall project impact. Some basic concepts that can be instituted as part of all projects include:

- Establish a multi-disciplinary team that initially looks at the project route and identifies sensitive areas along the proposed route that should receive special attention. This process will help identify a route that has the least impact. In addition, the team can identify areas along the final route that can be utilized for the implementation of specific measures based on environmental sensitivity and feasibility. DNR would be very interested in contributing its expertise to the make up of any of these teams.
- Identify key areas along the proposed route that will require, or are suitable for, the installation of sediment basins and post construction stormwater quality wetlands / basins. These areas will more than likely require the purchase of additional right-of-way (permanent structures associated with post-construction) or a temporary easement (sediment basins).
- Establish roadside management zones. The roadside, where feasible, should be managed to accommodate the operational, environmental, and visual functions of the roadway. Operational functions include the roadway and median, access control, sight distances for signs and utilities, and snow storage. Environmental functions include features that preserve water quality, water

quality protection and improvement, wetland and sensitive area protection, noise control, habitat protection, habitat connectivity, and air quality. Visual functions are those that are designed to promote a positive quality of life including distraction screening, corridor continuity, roadway and adjacent property buffering, and scenic view preservation. This approach to highway construction can be beneficial by protecting water quality from pollutants generated from highway runoff and reducing off-site pollutants from entering INDOT drainage systems.

- Once the right-of-way is established and the project complete, INDOT should fence the right-ofway in order to preclude unauthorized encroachments.
- To better control problems related to ground stabilization, we recommend that disturbed areas be limited in size at any one time in order to facilitate an aggressive stabilization program.
- Establish an environmental project manager that is responsible to oversee implementation of the stormwater pollution prevention plan and other resource related issues. The individual should be trained and have the authority to initiate changes on the project site.
- Establish a specific sequencing plan that outlines details on how construction activities coincide with the implementation of erosion and sediment control measures and stormwater quality practices.

Utilize the right of way to accommodate stormwater quality measures, including but not limited to:

- Select water quality management measures based on specific site conditions such as terrain, slope, watershed, and accessibility.
- Approach erosion and sediment control implementation systematically. Runoff is treated by more than one measure to increase the efficiency of sediment removal.
- Where appropriate, seek alternatives to hard armament by utilizing turf reinforcement mats and other available technology for erosion control.
- Utilize plant species that are tolerant to site conditions and effective for erosion control.
- Where appropriate, bioengineering should be considered as the first alternative for stream bank stabilization.

Implement an aggressive soil stabilization program that requires temporary and permanent stabilization. For example use incremental seeding where cut / fill areas are stabilized when each 10-foot or more of the lift or cut area is exposed.

Our agency appreciates the opportunity to comment on these important issues at this point and we look forward to continued coordination of this project.

Sincerely,

Paul J. Ehret Deputy Director

Department of Natural Resources

Note: Please include the above DNR # on any future correspondence regarding this project.



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY REGIONS

77 WEST JACKSON BOULEVARD CHICAGO, IL 60604-3590

SEP 2 9 2003

REPLYTO THE ATTENTION OF (B-19J)

Robert E. Dirks, P.E., Environmental Engineer Federal Highway Administration - Indiana Division 575 N. Pennsylvania St., Room 254 Indianapolis, Indiana 46204

RE: U.S. EPA Comments on the Tier 1 Pre-FEIS I-69 Evansville to Indianapolis, Indiana Preferred Alternative and Mitigation Package Document.

Dear Mr. Dirks:

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 5 (U.S. EPA) has reviewed the above referenced document. The document contains some information regarding selection of Alternative 3C for this project's preferred alternative. It also provides general responses to major issues identified during the Tier 1 DEIS comment period and tentatively presents proposed mitigation.

We appreciate the opportunity to comment. However, we note that many of the responses provided in this document refer the reader to the Tier I Final Environmental Impact Statement (Tier I FEIS) for additional details and information. Since the Tier I FEIS has not yet been released by FHWA, we cannot comment on the adequacy of the responses until we have had the opportunity to review the Tier I FEIS. Consequently, the comments we provide below do not obviate our original comments in U.S. EPA's November 7, 2002, comment letter on the Tier I DEIS. We look forward to reviewing all additional information that the Tier I FEIS will contain.

With this in mind, we provide the following comments for your consideration in preparing the Tier 1 FEIS for this project.

Streamlining - Preparation for NEPA Tier 2 documentation:

For the alternative that the Tier 1 FEIS identifies as the Preferred Alternative corridor, we recommend that the Tier 1 FEIS include an environmental impacts summary table that separately identifies the estimated impacts associated with each proposed segment of independent utility (SIU) for the corridor. We recommend that the SIUs' summary table include the same criteria categories that are included in the Tier 1 DEIS, Table S-6 and Table 6-1: Summary of Key Performance Measures and Environmental Impacts. In addition, we recommend including new criteria categories: (1) estimated total mitigation costs for each SIU, and (2) estimated forest fragmentation for each SIU. For forest fragmentation impacts, we suggest displaying two numbers: (1) number of distinct forest tracts that could be fragmented, and (2) the number of forest acres lost due to forest fragmentation. If applicable, include the summary results obtained

from the regulatory assessments recommended in our Tier I DEIS comment letter, for karst and forest land. In order to help streamline the NEPA process for this project we recommend that based on the estimated impacts associated with each SIU, the Tier I FEIS specifically identify the type of NEPA document (i.e, EA or EIS) that will be undertaken for each SIU during Tier 2 and provide the rational for this determination. The SIUs' environmental impacts summary table, recommended above, will help with this determination.

Wetlands and Waters of the U.S.:

Part 2 - Selection of Preferred Alternative, (pp. 11 and 12) of the Pre-FEIS document identifies post-Tier 1 DEIS efforts to further avoid and minimize wetland impacts. The document discusses two areas of reduced wetland impact by choosing a specific corridor variation around Washington for Alternatives 3 and 4, and shifting the location of the corridor to avoid Prides Creek for Alternatives 3, 4 and 5. If the Preferred Alternative identified in the Tier 1 FEIS includes this new corridor route, then the Tier 1 FEIS should include a full discussion on the trade-offs with other environmental and socio-economic factors for this new corridor route compared to the ones previously proposed in the Tier 1 DEIS.

When discussing 303(d) waters in the Tier 1 FEIS, be sure to indicate the kind(s) of impairment for each impaired water body segment.

Tier 1 FEIS/ROD Mitigation Commitments:

<u>Part 3 - Section 7 Consultation</u> includes a reference to proposed measures developed by the highway agencies to conserve the Indiana bat and bald eagle, and to avoid, minimize, and mitigate effects to those species. The Tier 1 FEIS should include a discussion of those specific measures.

Part 4 - Preliminary Mitigation Measures states that "[s]pecific mitigation commitments will be included in Tier 2 NEPA documents." Since a project of this magnitude will have significant impacts to the human environment in Southwest Indiana, including significant adverse impacts to a broad variety of natural resources, we request that the Tier 1 FEIS and Record of Decision (ROD) contain firm statements of commitment to, at the very least, implement all mitigation measures that are identified in the Pre-FEIS mitigation package. In addition, we strongly recommend that the project commit in the Tier 1 FEIS/ROD to bridge over all rivers and streams, and their associated wetlands and floodplains. The impacts of and mitigation for road salt spray and salt runoff should be discussed in the Tier 1 FEIS, as should spill prevention and containment measures for the road and bridge surfaces. Discussion, if applicable, of a possible interchange to serve visitors to the Patoka National Wildlife Refuge should include an explanation of how non-refuge lands adjacent to such an interchange will be protected from incompatible development.

Tier 1 FEIS NEPA Documentation and Public Disclosure:

Since the Tier 1 FEIS is a NEPA public disclosure document it is important that the document be written so that there is no confusion over the rationale for the project and how decisions were made. With this in mind, we offer the following recommendations for the Tier 1 FEIS.

Purpose and Need - The Tier 1 DEIS presents an extensive array of "goals" and "objectives" for the proposal, including the three "core goals" and their associated "objectives." To help the public better understand the need for the project, we recommend that the Tier 1 FEIS include a concise (one or two sentences) statement at the beginning of the Purpose and Need section, that clearly identifies the underlying problem (i.e., need) that this project is being proposed to solve.

Consistent use of language/terminology - In order to enhance the public's understanding of the project and the way decisions were made, we recommend that terms and modifiers be consistently used throughout the Tier 1 FEIS.

Part 2 - Selection of Preferred Alternative of the Pre-FEIS document, does not consistently use the modifiers "relative" and "relatively" when referring to the "low," "medium" or "high" relative performance ratings given to the alternatives. We note that performance measure thresholds were not used for the basis of eliminating alternatives. The elimination of alternatives was based on a "relative" comparison between the results of the build alternatives' performance measures.

We recommend that the Tier 1 FEIS use the modifier "relative" (i.e., relative results) to consistently indicate that alternatives were eliminated by a "relative" comparison between the results of the build alternatives' performance measures. In addition, the use of modifiers such as "poor," "weak" and "bad" should be consistent with the modifiers used (low, medium and high) for the "relative" ranking comparison of the performance measures.

For example, on page 1 of the pre-FEIS package under the "Alternative Analysis in DEIS," in the section titled: Selection of Preferred Alternative, it states: "Four alternatives (1, 2A, 2B and 4A) were designated as non-preferred due to poor performance in satisfying the goals of the project." While the next bullet states: "Five alternatives (2C, 3B, 3C, 4B, and 4C) were designated as preferred, having a higher performance with an acceptable level of impacts." Because an alternative is a "relatively lower performer" this does not necessarily make that alternative a "bad performer." In this example, it would be more accurate to replace the word "poor" with the phrase "relatively lower," and modify the phrase "higher performance" with "relatively higher performance."

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the August 2003, Pre-FEIS I-69 Preferred Alternative and Mitigation Package. If you have any questions please contact Virginia Laszewski, 312-886-7501. We look forward to reading your full response to our November 7, 2002, Tier 1 DEIS comment letter when the Tier 1 FEIS is available for our review.

Sincerely,

Kenneth A. Westlake, Chief

Environmental Planning and Evaluation Branch

ce: J. Bryan Nicol, Commissioner, INDOT
Jim Townsend, Regulatory Branch, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers - Louisville District
Scott Pruitt, Field Supervisor, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service - Bloomington Field Office
Lori Kaplan, Commissioner, Indiana Department of Environmental Management
John Goss, Director, Indiana Department of Natural Resources



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY

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September 25, 2003

Operations Division Regulatory Branch (North) ID No. 200301014-gdn

Mr. Michael Grovak Bernardin, Lochmueller & Associates 6200 Vogel Road Evansville, Indiana 47715

Dear Mr. Grovak:

This is in regard to your letter dated July 29, 2003, which included a copy of the <u>Preferred Alternative and Mitigation Documents</u> for the proposed Interstate 69 corridor project from Evansville to Indianapolis, Indiana. You have requested our comments for consideration in the preparation of the Final Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

In regard to the preferred alternative package, a detailed analysis of the five preferred alternatives (including 2 hybrid routes) were developed and analyzed based on the three core goals outlined in the purpose and need statement. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), suggested hybrids since they felt a more extensive analysis would be necessary particularly in the karst and other critical resource sensitive areas. The hybrid alternatives are combinations of other alternatives outlined in the Tier 1 Draft EIS. It was noted that Alternative 3C was selected as the "Single Preferred Alternative". We recommend that further site assessment and construction measures be studied in Tier 2 to further avoid and minimize impacts to "waters of the U.S." associated with each crossing. For example, if further site assessment indicates a particular stream or wetland has high quality functions and values, low impact options such as clear span bridging should be considered to avoid and minimize impacts. This type of analysis would satisfy the Section 404(b)(1) guidelines to insure that the alternative construction methods for each crossing of a "water of the U.S." is the least environmentally damaging practicable alternative when considering cost, existing technology and logistics in light of the overall project purpose.

We have completed our review of the proposed <u>Forest and Wetland Mitigation and Enhancement Plan</u> developed for the Tier 1 EIS. This plan identifies 16 sites that are potential candidates for restoration/replacement, conservation/preservation and includes an educational and research theme. This appears to be an acceptable approach. However, the issues of concern to the Corps as it pertains to mitigation for permits that may be issued under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (CWA) would be as follows:

- 1. The avoidance of stream and wetland impacts to the maximum extent practicable.
- 2. In kind replacement when mitigation is deemed necessary.
- 3. Mitigation ratios should be based on a function and value assessment of the resource being affected.
- 4. Determining when it is appropriate to mitigate off-site.
- 5. Insuring off-site mitigation is located within the 8-digit watershed area.
- 6. Insuring cumulative impacts to "waters of the U.S." do not exceed minimal impact level.

These issues would be evaluated on a site-specific and cumulative impact basis for impacts under Section 404 of the CWA.

Please be advised, we have checked our Regulatory database and confirmed that no existing wetland mitigation sites or wetland mitigation banks would be impacted by the Alternative 3C alignment. In addition to the 16 candidate sites (mentioned above), the Corps would not be opposed to additional mitigation being performed at an existing mitigation site if determined appropriate as part of the permit process. I note that the Indiana Department of Transportation has existing mitigation sites in some southern Indiana Counties that may be enlarged or improved. However, additional management and monitoring of these sites would be expected.

In considering a project of this magnitude we believe the two-tier EIS process continues to be an appropriate tool for identifying and evaluating environmental concerns, socio-economic issues and accessibility relative to the purpose and need for the project. More importantly, the Tier 1 EIS has specifically identified all of the important natural resource areas within the five alternative corridors. This process is satisfactory to the Corps for early coordination under Section 404 of the CWA.

We understand that the Tier 2 process would address site-specific detail on project impacts to include further avoidance, minimization, and compensation of unavoidable impacts to "waters of the U.S.". Permit processing could begin at the late stages of the Tier 2 evaluation. However, final design plans would need to be developed and the footprint of fill in "waters of the United States," including wetlands determined for each site and work activity before submitting an application to us. This information is necessary in order to determine whether or not each individual crossing could be authorized under a nationwide permit, the Indiana Regional General Permit or if an individual Department of the Army permit is required. In this case, it would be appropriate to submit one application for each segment of highway that has independent utility.

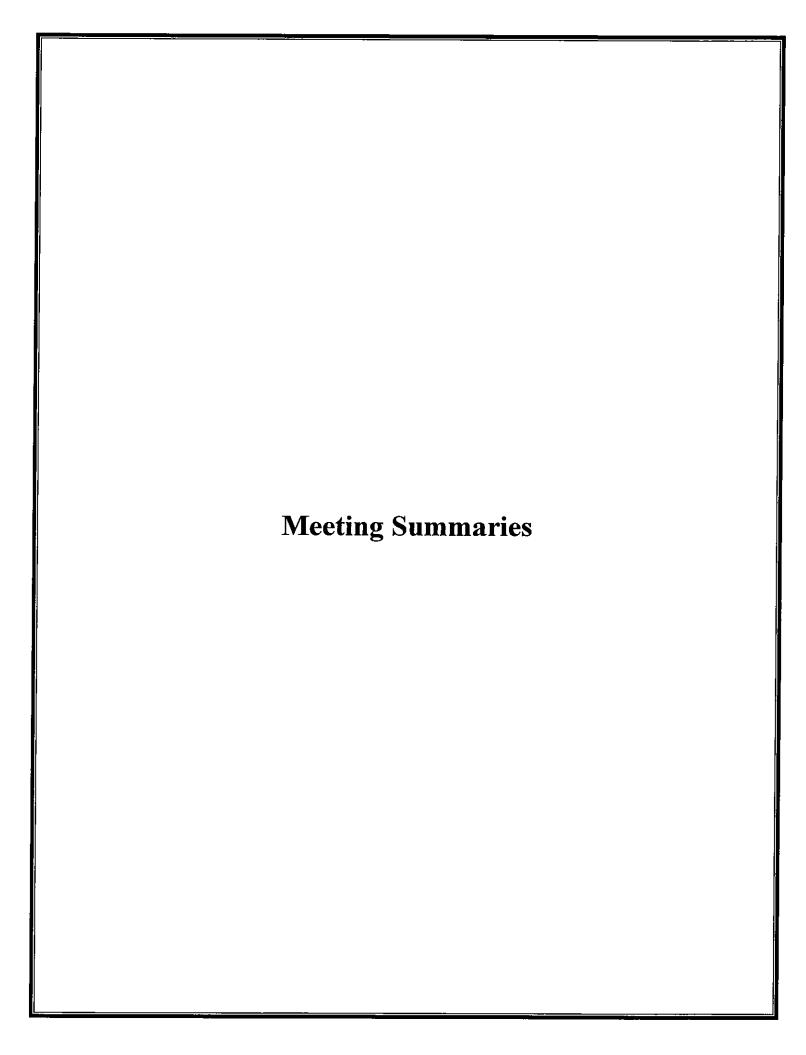
We appreciate the opportunity to participate in the Tier 1 process and look forward to coordinating with you during the Tier 2 evaluation. If you have any questions concerning this matter, please contact this office at the above address, ATTN: CEORL-OP-FN or call Mr. Gerry Newell at (502) 315-6683. Any correspondence on this matter should refer to our ID Number 200301014-gdn.

Sincerely,

James M. Townsend

Chief, Regulatory Branch

Operations Division



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I-69 Agency Meeting on August 27, 2003 People in Attendance

People in attendance at this meeting included the following:

Name	Agency	Phone Number	Email Address
Tony Desimone	FHWA	317-226-5307	anthony.desimone@fhwa.dot.gov
Lyle Sadler	INDOT	317-233-6972	lsadler@indot.state.in.us
Roger Manning	INDOT	317-232-5204	rmanning@indot.state.in.us
Rick Jones	DNR-DHPA	317-232-1646	rjones@dnr.state.in.us
Pam Fisher	IDOC	317-232-8893	pfisher@commerce.state.in.us
David Perry	IDEM	317-233-4638	dperry@dem.state.in.us
Ronald Hellmich	DNR-NP	317-232-8059	rhellmich@dnr.state.in.us
Frank Nierzwicki	MPO Bloomington	812-349-3531	nierzwif@city.bloomington.in.us
Ken Day	Forest Service	812-275-5987	kday@fs.fed.us
Tom Kenny	USEPA,R-5,ORC	312-886-0708	kenny.Thomas@epa.gov
Ken Westlake	USEPA, NEPA	312-886-2910	westlake.Kenneth@epa.gov
Virginia Laszewski	USEPA, NEPA	312-886-7501	laszewski.Virginia@epa.gov
Cathy Garra	USEPA, Wetlands	312-886-0241	garra.Catherine@epa.gov
Gerry Newell	ACE	502-315-6683	Gerry.D.Newell@LRL02.usace.army.mil
Mike Litwin	USFWS	812-334-4261	michael_litwin@fws.gov
Bill Maudlin	IDNR	317-233-4666	bmaudlin@dnr.state.in.us
Catherine Gremillion-	IDNR	317-232-8160	kgsmith@dnr.state.in.us
Smith			-
Robert Dirks	FWHA	317-226-7492	robert.dirks@fhwa.dot.gov
Bill Malley	Akin Gump	202-887-4780	wmalley@akingump.com
Janice Osadczuk	INDOT	317-232-5468	josadczuk@indot.state.in.us
John Carr	IDNR-DHPA	317-232-1646	jcarr@dnr.state.in.us
Tom Cervone	BLA	812-479-6200	tcervone@blainc.com
Jeremy Kieffner	BLA	812-479-6200	jkieffner@blainc.com
Mike Grovak	BLA	812-479-6200	mgrovak@aol.com

In July, 2003, a Preferred Alternative and Mitigation Package was published for the I-69, Evansville to Indianapolis Study, as part of Indiana's Streamlined EIS Procedures (dated July 6, 2001). The Preferred Alternative and Mitigation Package is provided to review agencies to assist them in providing comments on the selection of a preferred alternative and proposed mitigation measures before the Final EIS for this project is published. A meeting regarding this package was held on Wednesday, August 27, at Indiana Government Center South in Indianapolis. The following is a summary of agency issues raised at that meeting. As noted in the cover letter transmitting the Preferred Alternative and Mitigation Package, comments regarding the information in this package are due by Monday, September 29, 2003. They are to be sent to:

Michael Grovak
Bernardin, Lochmueller & Associates
6200 Vogel Rd.
Evansville IN 47715

The meeting began at 9:00am EST and ended at 12:30pm EST. It was held in Conference Room C at the Indiana Government Center South building. A list of attendees is attached. Information discussed in this meeting included the Preferred Alternative Package and the Proposed Mitigation Measures for forests, wetlands, TES species, and other impacts associated with the I-69 project. Michael Grovak of Bernardin, Lochmueller & Associates presented information describing the Preferred Alternative, the rationale for its selection, and major issues raised during the comment period on the DEIS. Dr. Thomas Cervone of Bernardin, Lochmueller presented information regarding proposed mitigation measures.

The issues raised by those present are summarized below, along with the FHWA/INDOT responses to those issues. In some cases, the responses provided below have been refined to provide more detailed information than was available at the time of the meeting.

US Environmental Protection Agency (Virginia Laszewski) Will comments from this meeting be included in the FEIS? *Response* – Yes, they will be included in Chapter 11 - Comments, Coordination, and Public Involvement.

US Fish and Wildlife Service (Mike Litwin) Request that meeting writeup also be sent to Andy King at USFWS. Response – Will do.

US Environmental Protection Agency (Virginia Laszewski) — Are all typical sections 4-lanes? Response — In most areas they are four lanes. In some areas they are more than four lanes, as determined by forecasted traffic volumes.

US Environmental Protection Agency (Kenneth Westlake) – Are the typical sections in some areas made narrow by use of Jersey barriers? Response – That may be the case

in some urban areas. Typical Cross Section D at the end of Part 1 of the Preferred Alternative package shows such an arrangement.

US Environmental Protection Agency (Virginia Laszewski) – What is the length of Section 1? Response – 13 miles.

US Environmental Protection Agency (Cathy Garra) — What was the reason for the interchange located near Crane? Response — Came from early planning studies and public comments. Economic analyses conducted during the study indicated that Crane has a significant untapped potential to encourage economic development in southwest Indiana, and that a lack of access to it is one reason that this potential remains untapped. Also, Crane remains an important military facility, and the close proximity of the interchange will improve access for shipments to and from that facility.

US Environmental Protection Agency (Cathy Garra) – Would there be a security issue with Crane having a 4-lane interstate located that close to the base? Response – Crane has not commented on the issue.

US Fish and Wildlife Service (Mike Litwin) — The Patoka River National Wildlife refuge did reserve a corridor back in 1990 for the I-69 route. Is there still a corridor reserved? Response — Coordination with the refuge indicates this corridor is still preserved for a highway. This corridor was designated in the US Fish and Wildlife Service's EIS establishing the Refuge.

US Environmental Protection Agency (Kenneth Westlake) – Was there legislation which identified service to Crane as a need for I-69 to address? *Response* – Crane is not named in any of the legislation establishing the National I-69 corridor.

Indiana Department of Natural Resources (John Carr – Division of Historic Preservation) – What is the reason for the Preferred Alternative taking a "right angle" turn near Newberry? Response – There are several reasons. These include agricultural impact avoidance; lessen the impacts to the Amish Communities near Odon, and avoiding the hillier terrain east of the current alignment.

US Environmental Protection Agency (Virginia Laszewski) — Does the long-range transportation plan from the Bloomington MPO include upgrading SR 37? Response — Yes, for the areas of SR 37 that are within the Bloomington MPO boundaries. This upgrade calls for SR 37 to be upgraded.

Indiana Department of Environmental Management (David Perry) — What are the miles for each individual section? *Response* — They are contained in the handout.

US Environmental Protection Agency (Kenneth Westlake) – Does INDOT's long-range plan contain the upgrading of SR 37 from Bloomington to Indianapolis?

Response – INDOT's current Long Range Plan shows the upgrading of SR 37 from I-465 to SR 144. INDOT is currently amending its Long Range Plan to show a freeway-type facility in SR 37 corridor from I-465 to Bloomington.

US Environmental Protection Agency (Kenneth Westlake) Did the DEIS state that INDOT's long-range transportation plan includes the SR 37 upgrade? Response — The fact that the SR 37 upgrade is in the long-range plan will be stated in the FEIS. The discussion of added travel lanes on SR 37 from I-465 to SR 144 is included in the 5.26.3, as part of the Cumulative Impact Analysis.

US Environmental Protection Agency (Virginia Laszewski) – Is there a map showing each individual Economic Region boundary? *Response* – Yes. It is Figure 3-18 in the DEIS.

US Environmental Protection Agency (Virginia Laszewski) – How are the counties divided into economic regions? *Response* – The economic models require that regions be specified as a county or collection of counties. The economic regions for the study area included those associated with Indianapolis (Hendricks, Morgan, Marion, and Johnson; Terre Haute (Vigo and Clay), Evansville (Posey, Vanderburgh, Warrick, and Gibson), and Bloomington (Monroe). All study area counties not associated with one of these major urban areas are in a single economic region, Rural Southwest Indiana.

US Environmental Protection Agency (Tom Kenney) — Does INDOT's long-range plan include any mobility corridor between Terre Haute and Bloomington? *Response* — There is no mobility corridor directly connecting Terre Haute to Bloomington. However, travel between these cities is served by a combination of routes that have been designated as mobility corridors — specifically, SR 46 to US 231 to I-70. The same routes also are included on Indiana's National Highway System (NHS) map and have been designated as part of Indiana's statewide network of commerce corridors. Please see Figures 2-1, 2-3, and 2-5 in the DEIS.

Indiana Department of Natural Resources (John Carr – Division of Historic Preservation) – What is Alternative 3C-H referenced in Tables 2-2 to 2-16? Which is the preferred alternative? *Response* – The H stands for Hybrid – this is one of the hybrid alternatives which were considered. The preferred alternative is Alternative 3C.

US Environmental Protection Agency (Virginia Laszewski) — What other resources were impacted by the Prides Creek shift? *Response* — Pasture, 2 homes, and some reclaimed coal mine ground. The FEIS will discuss the gains and losses associated with the shifts in the alignments.

US Environmental Protection Agency (Cathy Garra) — What were the trade-offs of Washington variation selection? Response — The trade-offs were summarized in the letter

sent to resource agencies earlier this year requesting comments on the Washington variations. These trade offs will be documented in the FEIS.

US Environmental Protection Agency (Virginia Laszewski) – Did you do any shifts to try and avoid impacts associated with the other alternatives? Response – Yes, we looked but were unable to identify any other opportunities other than the shifts that were made. Those who commented on the DEIS were helpful in identifying several such opportunities to shift alignments to avoid impacts.

US Environmental Protection Agency (Cathy Garra) – Are all 5 preferred alternatives considered practicable? Response – Alternate 3B is considered impracticable due to its environmental impacts. Generally, the other four preferred alternatives appear to be practicable. It is important to remember, however, that the LEDPA analysis is being included in the Tier 1 FEIS for informational purposes only, as part of a Section 404(b)(1) consistency analysis. A formal LEDPA finding is not being made at Tier 1 because Section 404 permitting will not occur at this stage. Rather, LEDPA findings will be made in conjunction with the Section 404 permitting for each Tier 2 section.

United States Environmental Protection Agency (Kenneth Westlake) — Would you deem the hybrids you considered as impracticable or just not as good performers as some other alternatives? Response — Based on the information available, the 2/3C hybrid appears to be impracticable. The 4/5B hybrid is a closer call, because of its similarity to Alternative 4B; however, the 4/5B hybrid is inferior to 4B — it performs poorer, costs more, and has higher impacts, so it also could be considered impracticable. (Please also see the response above to Cathy Garra regarding consideration of practicability at Tier 1.)

United State Environmental Protection Agency (Kenneth Westlake (EPA) – Do the accidents reduction numbers in the DEIS include all types of accidents or are they divided up by type of accident? Response – Three types of accidents are forecasted in the DEIS. These are fatal accidents (those resulting in one or more deaths); injury accidents (those resulting in one or more serious injuries); and property damage only accidents (those not resulting in a death or serious injury).

US Environmental Protection Agency (Kenneth Westlake) – Does impact of land use changes include the effects of the No-Build? Response – Yes. Section 5.26 (Cumulative Impacts) estimates these changes. Forecasted changes in land use which occur due to each alternative are in addition to those due to projects in the No-Build alternative.

US Environmental Protection Agency (Kenneth Westlake) — What is the source for the information on the total amount of farmland impacts over the next 20 years as stated in the Cumulative Impacts section of the DEIS? Response — The source for this information is the Indiana Agricultural Statistics Service, published by the US Department of Agriculture, available at www.nass.usda.gov/in/historic. This web site provides information from the Census of Agriculture dating back to the year 1900.

US Environmental Protection Agency (Kenneth Westlake) – What is the status of the Biological Opinion? Response – The Biological Assessment was submitted to the USFWS on July 18, 2003 and received by them on July 21, 2003. The USFWS is in their 90-day review stage and then they have an additional 45 days to write the Biological Opinion. A review letter from USFWS indicates it may not take all 135 days.

US Environmental Protection Agency (Cathy Garra) – Are their any other practicable alternative except 3C? Response – Yes, all the preferred alternatives included in the DEIS are practicable except Alternative 3B. (Please also see the response above to Cathy Garra regarding the consideration of practicability at Tier 1.)

US Environmental Protection Agency (Kenneth Westlake) — Do you envision completing EA's or EIS's on each Tier 2 section? Response — We will most likely be completing EIS's on all of the individual sections.

US Environmental Protection Agency (Virginia Laszewski) — Will you do an impact analysis in the FEIS in table form for each individual section of the Preferred Alternative? Response — Yes.

US Environmental Protection Agency (Ken Westlake) - When will you begin to buy parcels or easements for mitigation? Will it be within Tier 1? Response - We are working with USFWS on acquiring some hibernacula now. They may not be acquired before the Tier 1 ROD, but we are currently taking steps to acquire them. We are looking for sites, especially for mitigation of upland forests and wetlands. Most of the acquisitions will occur during Tier 2 and following stages. The Tier 2 Project Management Consultant (PMC) will oversee mitigation for all Tier 2 studies.

US Environmental Protection Agency (Kathy Garra) Will mitigation occur in the same watershed as the impacts? Response – That is what we are trying to do. Any ideas for improvement/doing it different, please let us know. A map was provided at the meeting showing potential mitigation sites by 8-digit HUC.

Indiana Department of Natural Resources (Catherine Gremillion-Smith) We also are concerned about impacts to wildlife throughout the entire corridor, including those to species which are not threatened or endangered. This project will create barriers throughout the corridor. Consider especially wildlife; it is a barrier if they cannot cross the highway. Response – Other mitigation will occur. We welcome your suggestions for measures that will help mitigate or eliminate such impacts.

US Environmental Protection Agency (Virginia Laszewski) Where will dollars for mitigation come from? Where will they be identified? *Response* — We will estimate mitigation costs for the Preferred Alternative.

US Environmental Protection Agency (Virginia Laszewski) Will you document local and regional land use and planning regulations. *Response* – These will be documented in the FEIS.

US Environmental Protection Agency (Virginia Laszewski) We anticipate seeing specific mitigation commitments. This includes bridging rivers and floodplains for the extent of the project. This also includes wildlife crossings. Rather than statements about what is "reasonable and feasible," we would like to see specific parameters. Response — We will work with IDNR for conceptual ideas for wildlife other than TES. Also, the information presented in the Preferred Alternative and Mitigation Package does not include mitigation related to Section 7 and Section 106. These will be added to the FEIS when they are finalized. Also, the mitigation ratios already specified are commitments. In addition, we are committed to bridging the entire Patoka River floodplain. Additional specifics, in many cases, will be provided in the Tier 2 studies.

Hoosier Environmental Council (Andy Knott) – Has there been a commitment to bridge the Patoka flood plain? Response – Yes, there is. This was mentioned in the DEIS, and will again be included in the FEIS. Bridging waterways will greatly reduce impacts on waterways and floodplains; however, pier and abutments may still be needed in these areas. Additional commitments regarding streams, rivers, and floodplains will be made in Tier 2.

Hoosier Environmental Council (Andy Knott) — Was it stated that the decision to go straight north in Daviess County was to avoid unglaciated karst? *Response* — No, that is not the case. There really is no unglaciated karst to speak of until you get to Cincinnati in Greene County.

Hoosier Environmental Council (Andy Knott) — Is the karst survey not complete? Why did we not do field survey of karst? Response — We were provided with cave information from the Indiana Geological Survey, which in their opinion was the best available information on cave location for the first tier of a tiered study. It included caves above a certain size. In addition, we have added the location of 246 caves from Indiana Cave Surveys. Sam Frushour also provided 8 - 10 USGS maps with additional caves and karst features noted. We have shifted alignments since the Draft EIS to avoid some of these features. We will look for additional caves in Tier 2. We have published maps of cave densities, IGS layers include actual caves, as well as springs and sinkholes. These also are important for TES.

US Environmental Protection Agency (Virginia Laszewski) – Did you consider salt spray and its impacts on wetlands? Will you erect signs about this? *Response* – Page 6 of the Mitigation Section discusses this issue. This also is addressed in the Karst MOU.

Hoosier Environmental Council (Andy Knott) – How did Congress characterize the National I-69 Project? *Response* – Congress established a national policy but not a national mandate. Individual states can decide whether to build their portion of I-69, or not.

Hoosier Environmental Council (Andy Knott) – Please explain further the point in the presentation about total numbers as compared with percentages. Response - The basic point is that, given the large scale of the study area, a small percentage difference can translate into a large number in absolute terms. This point applies equally to benefits and impacts. For example, some commenters have pointed out that some of the project's benefits translate into small percentage changes. These percentages appear small because of the sheer size of the 26-county study area. For the same reason, percentages could be used to make the impacts appear small – for example, the farmland impacts of this project would appear small if presented as a percentage of the total farmland losses in Southwest Indiana over the next 20 years. We are not saying that the farmland losses are minor just because they may seem small in percentage terms; by the same token, the benefits should not be considered minor, just because they may seem small in percentage terms. Also, it is important to note that the summary tables in the DEIS (Table S-6 and 6-1) consistently present the both benefits and impacts in absolute numbers rather than as percentages. This approach was used to ensure consistency in presentation of benefits and impacts in the summary table. In addition, percentages were presented at various places in the document to provide an additional perspective on the data.

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I-69 Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement (Evansville to Indianapolis)

June 4th and 5th 2002

DATE:

June 4 - 5, 2002

LOCATION:

Southwestern Indiana

ATTENDEES:

Ken Westlake – USEPA

Virginia Laszewski – USEPA

Cathy Garra – USEPA
Gary Jordan – IDNR
Andy King - USFWS
Robert Dirks - FHWA
Janice Osadczuk - INDOT

David Isley – Bernardin-Lochmueller & Associates Tom Cervone – Bernardin-Lochmueller & Associates Jim Gulick – Bernardin-Lochmueller & Associates Kia Gillette – Bernardin-Lochmueller & Associates Rusty Yeager – Bernardin-Lochmueller & Associates

GUEST

SPEAKERS:

Bill McCoy - USFWS (Patoka River National Wildlife Refuge)

Ken Day, Wilma Marine, Kelle Reynolds - USFS (Hoosier

National Forest)

Jim Richards – Blue Springs Caverns

Dave Hudak - Sycamore Land Trust (Muscatatuck National

Wildlife Refuge and Beanblossom Bottoms)

An Environmental Tour of southwestern Indiana was held on June 4 and 5, 2002. The tour was provided to review agencies in order to familiarize them with the alternatives and show environmentally sensitive areas that may be impacted by the different alternatives. Selective corridor shifts will be made, if possible, to reflect comments received during the tour. In addition, possible sites for wetland mitigation were discussed and seen in the field. Four stops included guest speakers. They were: Bill McCoy from the USFWS, who presented information on the Patoka River National Wildlife Refuge; Ken Day with Wilma Marine, Kelle Reynolds from the Hoosier National Forest, who discussed the importance of the Tincher Special Area; Jim Richards from Blue Springs Caverns, who discussed karst and cave issues along with a tour in the cave; and Dave Hudak from the Sycamore Land Trust, who discussed the Muscatatuck Wildlife Refuge and Bean Blossom Bottoms. An agenda for the tour is attached as well as a map of Blue Springs Caverns, Patoka River Bottoms, and the Beanblossom Bottoms complex. Comments received during the tour are listed below.

I-69 Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement (Evansville to Indianapolis) June 4th and 5th 2002

GENERAL COMMENTS:

- Consider bridging the entire floodplain at the Patoka refuge area to allow for wildlife crossing and account for hydrology factors – USEPA
- The Patoka refuge has recently acquired additional land, we need to find out where this is. - Patoka National Wildlife Refuge
- Avoid placing interchanges in/near streams and wetlands, for example on page 12 of Alternative 3 – USEPA
- Is there enough detail in a Tier 1 EIS to properly review the project, for example, is there enough information on the karst areas (dye tracing)? -USEPA
- Forest fragmentation and its affects to neo-tropical migrating birds may be an important issue – USEPA
- Is it possible to tell from the coal mine GIS layer which mines are current and which have been closed? – USEPA
- Alternative 5 would have to be modified to avoid pedestrian/bike trail areas in the State Forest. Public parkland and designated recreational areas of forests cannot be used, per Section 4(f) of the 1966 Department of Transportation Act, unless 1) avoidance creates major problems, and 2) all reasonable measures are taken to minimize harm - INDOT
- Kelle Reynolds from the Hoosier National Forest stressed the ecological importance and uniqueness of the Tincher Special Area. A biological survey within the area, north of US 50, has found 18 cave species. An area with 20 species is considered a global subterranean "hot spot," and the portion of the Tincher Special Area south of US 50 has not yet been surveyed. It is expected more species will be found. - USFS
- Significant concern was raised as to why Alternative 5 passed through the middle of the Tincher Special Area - USFS, USEPA, USFWS, IDNR
- Jim Richards from Blue Springs Caverns spoke about the history and discovery of the cave, and took tour participants on a boat tour of the cave. On the boat tour, Mr. Richards spoke about cave formations and species in Blue Springs Caverns. Blind cavefish and blind crayfish were observed during the tour.
- Mr. Richards also spoke about issues related to building a highway on karst terrain. He mentioned three important stages involved: (1) planning, as to avoid and minimize negative impacts to karst features, (2) construction and operation, specifically the use of Best Management Practices (BMPs) to minimize potential effects, and (3) development brought about after the construction of the highway. Of the three, this third stage of uncontrolled development often results in the most negative effects to karst features.

I-69 Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement (Evansville to Indianapolis)

June 4th and 5th 2002

GENERAL COMMENTS (con't)

- Mr. Richards noted that many of the counties in southern Indiana's karst region have no zoning and most residences and facilities have on-site septic systems. He recommended that access to a new highway be limited, so that development is focused on areas that are sewered.
- What does the low-income map represent? Does it represent the percent below the poverty level or below the state average? USEPA
- What is current and projected employment at Crane Naval Weapons facility?
 That should be documented in the DEIS for possible impacts on traffic USEPA
- Garrison Chapel Valley area near Ellettsville contains known hibernacula for the Indiana bat USFWS
- A general map for each individual alternative showing its options would be helpful – USEPA
- Dave Hudak from the Sycamore Land Trust spoke on the ecological importance of the Muscatatuck National Wildlife Refuge (Restle Unit in Monroe County) and the Beanblossom Bottoms area. The area along the valley from SR 37 to the White River is considered a high quality ecosystem and environmentally sensitive area. The Sycamore Land Trust would like to purchase and protect land along this valley from SR 37 to the White River. Sycamore Land Trust
- Strong displeasure was expressed at a highway corridor passing anywhere through the valley along Beanblossom Creek. Sycamore Land Trust
- The Sycamore Land Trust has acquired additional land, we need to find out where this is. Sycamore Land Trust
- There is a state nature preserve in the Bean Blossom Bottoms area, we need to know where this is. Sycamore Land Trust
- The Beanblossom Bottoms area has not had a comprehensive survey for threatened and endangered species. Such a survey should be done. – Sycamore Land Trust
- USEPA has grave concerns about the impacts to Beanblossom Bottoms and the Tincher Special Area within the Hoosier National Forest associated with Alternatives 5A, 5B, 3A, and 3B.
- Can the crossing of the White River near I-465 on one of the variations be avoided? USEPA
- The Winston-Thomas Sewage Treatment Plant is a superfund site. USEPA It is not included in any of the databases we have, why?
- Avoid impacting oxbow wetlands if possible, the state does not have many of these remaining. – IDNR

I-69 Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement (Evansville to Indianapolis)

June 4th and 5th 2002

GENERAL COMMENTS (con't)

- Portions of Morgan-Monroe State Forest, designated for public recreation in the forest management plan, are covered by Section 4(f), and should be avoided. – INDOT
- Routing of I-69 from Bloomington to I-465 should be evaluated for maximum use of SR 37. That would involve lots of business relocations close to I-465, but other proposed connection variations just south of I-465 would take out some extensive residential subdivisions. INDOT
- Alternative 5A clips a portion of Bradford Woods (Indiana University's outdoor education center). That is a Section 4(f) impact, so that alignment will be tweaked. INDOT
- Alternative 2 Species map is labeled incorrectly. USFWS
- There cannot be a highway within 100 feet of the nearest dedicated plot of a cemetery, therefore the alignment needs to be altered. INDOT
- The Goose Pond Area may not be a preferred mitigation area due to water depth. – IDNR
- Wetland mitigation sites NOT adjacent to highways are preferred. IDNR
- Tom Cervone (BLA) noted frequency of early morning fogs along White/Wabash/Patoka River flood plains south of Vincennes. USEPA suggested best design practices be used from other fog-prone roads around the country.
- If a preferred alternative is not identified in the DEIS, USEPA will assign a rating to each alternative and the entire DEIS will receive the most severe rating of all the alternatives. USEPA

This meeting was held in Indiana Government Center North, Room N755. It began at 1:00 pm. Attendees included:

Frank Nierzwicki

Bloomington MPO

Rose Zigenfus

Evansville Urban Transportation Study (Evansville MPO)

Sweson Yang

Indianapolis MPO

Pat Martin

West Central Indiana Economic Development District (Terre Haute

MPO)

Jackie Mitchell

West Central Indiana Economic Development District (Terre Haute

MPO)

William Malley
Vincent Bernardin
Thomas Cervone
Kia Gillette
Michael Grovak
David Isley
Robert Dirks

Akin, Gump, Strauss, Hauer & Feld Bernardin, Lochmueller & Associates Federal Highway Administration

Vaneeta Kumar Lyle Sadler

Indiana Department of Transportation Indiana Department of Transportation

INTRODUCTION - VINCE BERNARDIN

Vince Bernardin's introductory remarks described the purposes of this meeting. The two main purposes were:

- To present the screening of alternatives process and results.
- To introduce the Level 3 environmental analysis.

Mr. Bernardin began by discussing the analytical methods used in the screening of alternatives process. A printed copies of the Power Point presentation used to accompany both his and Mr. Michael Grovak's remarks is available upon request.

Main points in the discussion of analytical methods included:

- The analysis used state of the art techniques in travel demand modeling, applied regional geography, GIS technology, and regional economics. Methods are those developed by INDOT to evaluate all large-scale projects. These methods were applied consistently to evaluate all alternatives.
- These techniques are "blind" with regard to the type of corridor improvement contemplated (new facility vs. upgrade). For example, when these techniques were applied to the US 31 Corridor Study, they indicated that it was more beneficial to pursue upgrading existing US 31, rather than relocating it on a new alignment.
- There are two main technical tools used in this analysis. They are a travel demand model (Indiana Statewide Travel Model) and the econometric forecasting model (Regional Economic Model Inc., or REMI). These models are connected by two analytical bridges. First, the output of the travel model is post-processed to compute user benefits, which provides input into the econometric model. Second, population and employment growth estimates from the REMI model are fed back into the travel model as changed land use forecasts, which result in changes in the number of trips and trip patterns in the highway network. The first analytical bridge (feeding user benefits into the economic forecasting model) was used in the Screening of Alternatives, just completed. The second analytical bridge (feeding population and employment growth estimates back into the travel model) will be implemented in the Level 3 environmental impact analysis.
- The travel demand model consists of a network which encompasses all of Indiana, as well as significant parts of Michigan, Illinois, Kentucky, and Ohio. Further, it has been developed within the framework of a geographic information system (GIS). This allows spatial relationship to be understood, as well as the computation of accessibility measures.

During this portion of the presentation, **Rose Zigenfus** took issue with the designation of upgrading I-70 to six lanes between Indianapolis and Terre Haute as a "committed" project. She specifically asked whether this would be necessary if I-69 is build, and diverts traffic from I-70. **Vince Bernardin** stated that the traffic forecasts show this to be the case.

Also during this part of the presentation, Pat Martin asked for more detail as to how the boundaries of the Traffic Analysis Zones (TAZ's) were determined. Vince Bernardin explained that they were drawn based upon the configuration of the travel network, using census geography for their boundaries.

SCREENING OF ALTERNATIVES - MICHAEL GROVAK

Mike Grovak's portion of the presentation covered four points. These were:

- The Screening Framework, Including both the Purpose and Need as well as Other Factors
- The Screening Process
- Description of 5 Alternatives Recommended for Detailed Study
- Next Steps in the Study Process

Point 1 - The Screening Framework

The Draft Purpose and Need Statement documented a number of needs in Southwest Indiana, and also identified performance measures which could be used to evaluate how well different routes addressed those needs. The project goals and performance measures supporting those goals are based upon the Draft Statement of Purpose and Need, issued April 17, 2001, as well as input received on that Draft Statement from the public and consulting parties. A revised Purpose and Need Statement, which reflects this input, will be included in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for this project.

In addition to Purpose and Need Criteria, two other important considerations were used in the screening of alternatives. These were the cost of each alternative (both capital costs and ongoing operating and maintenance costs) as well as geographic diversity. Alternatives were evaluated within geographic groups. Thus, some route concepts which were not carried forward were better performers on many criteria than other routes which were carried forward.

Point 2 - The Screening Process

The 14 Route Concepts were grouped geographically. There groups, and their characteristics, are as follows:

- Western Group (3 routes). These follow US 41 for a significant distance, include a connection to Vincennes, and do not serve the Bloomington area.
- Central Group serving Bloomington (5 routes). Most of these follow SR 57 for a significant distance, serve Bloomington and (with one exception) also serve Washington.

- Central Group not serving Bloomington (3 routes). These generally follow a middle course, staying east of US 41 but west of Bloomington. Two serve Washington, but none serve Vincennes or Bloomington.
- Eastern Group (3 routes). These serve the eastern part of the study area. All serve Bloomington. In addition, two serve Bedford, and one serve Brown county.

Nearly all route concepts performed well on at least one performance measure. However, the Study Team is looking at them in their entirety in order to arrive at a decision. Whatever route is chosen will cost in the neighborhood of \$1 billion, or more. A responsible decision must consider all factors.

Three categories of performance measures were used to evaluate the route concepts. The three categories correspond to the three aspects of the project's purpose and need - transportation in Southwest Indiana; economic development in Southwest Indiana; and completion of the National I-69 Project.

The three categories included a total of ten "families" of performance measures. There were four families of performance measures in the "transportation" category; four in the "economic development" category; and two more in the "National I-69" category.

The performance of the route alternatives within each family of performance factors was discussed. Prior to this discussion, the use of scaled scores in evaluating alternatives was presented. The basis for using scaled scores is as follows.

Most of the factors used measured different transportation or economic variables. Accordingly, they are quantified in different units of measurement. For example, proximity measures are tabulations of the population within a specific number of minutes of a city or some other important destination, with the number of people being the unit of measurement. On the other hand, safety data are measured by the number of vehicular crashes, and business cost savings are measured in dollars. Further, in some cases (such as travel time) less is better; in other cases (such as job creation) more is better. To simplify the analysis and reduce these potential sources of confusion, all performance measures have been converted from their original units to a value which has been scaled from 0 to 100. Further, all performance measures in which "less is better" have been inverted and scaled on the same 0 - 100 yardstick. In other words, the alternative with the poorest score is always indexed to 0, and the one with the best score is always indexed to 100. This allows for simple comparisons between very different types of measures, and also provides more information than simply ranking the alternatives.

For most families of alternatives, there are multiple performance measures which are considered in arriving at the overall score for that family of alternatives. The scaled scores for each family are

computed by taking the average scaled scores on all alternatives, and renormalizing them on a scale of 0 - 100.

Transportation Families of Performance Measures

There were four families of transportation alternative performance measures, related to the four transportation goals in the Purpose and Need Statement. The discussion pertaining to the four families follows.

- Family 1 Connection Between Evansville and Indianapolis. This family of measures deal with how well each alternative improves the connection between Evansville and Indianapolis. This was identified in the Purpose and Need as a core objective for the project. Six route concepts scored fairly high, with scores of 80 or above. In order, they were F1, F2, H1 J, I, and H2. After these six top performers, there is a significant drop in scores.
- Family 2-Personal Accessibility. This family deals with how well each alternative improves regional connectivity. This was identified in the Purpose and Need as a core objective for this project. There were three subfamilies of indicators comprising this family. These subfamilies include accessibility indices, proximity tabulations, and vehicle miles on major highways. Route concepts which directly serve major population centers in Southwest Indiana tend to perform the best on this measures. The top ranking alternatives are H2, H1, B2, N, B1, F2, L2, and L1. After the 9th ranked alternative (D), there is a significant drop in accessibility scores.
- Family 3 Traffic Congestion. The Purpose and Need did not find that congestion would be a significant problem in the Study Area, but there will be localized spots where congestion will be a problem. Accordingly, congestion relief is a goal for the study, but not a core goal. Concept K stands out as the best performer, since it helps to relieve serious congestion on I65. Other alternatives which use the State Road 37 corridor, including B2, F2, L2, H2, and B1, tend to do well for the same reason. Other routes perform significantly poorer.
- Family 4-Traffic Safety. The Purpose and Need identified areas of rural Southwest Indiana which have significantly higher crash rates than rural Indiana as a whole. While this safety objective is a legitimate need, it is not of such a magnitude as to warrant being designated as a core objective. Performance scores for this alternative measure the reduction in fatal, injury, and property damage only accidents for each alternative. Seven route concepts performed very high by these measures. In order, they were D, N, B2, L2, H2, F2, C2, and L1. Following these, there is a significant drop off in route performance.

Economic Families of Performance Measures

There were four families of economic performance measures, related to the four economic performance goals in the Purpose and Need Statement. The discussion pertaining to these four families follows:

- Family 5 Monetary Cost Reductions. Most surface transportation project have a direct effect on the economy beyond the costs of transportation and maintenance. These include 1) time saved, 2) changes in vehicle operating cost, and 3) reductions in traffic accidents. Some of these effects translate into direct economic impacts, changing the flow of dollars in the economy. Time saved on business-related travel has such an effect, as do expenditures for vehicle operating expenses. A portion of safety costs (e.g., auto repair costs) also result in changes in flows of dollars in the economy. Monetary cost savings include that part of user benefits which reduce actual costs, or make money available for other uses. On this family of measures, one alternative (F2) does much better than any other alternative. The next best alternative, H2, has a scaled score of only 79.
- Family 6 Business Accessibility. The Purpose and Need found that Southwest Indiana businesses have comparatively poor accessibility to labor pools, as well as buyer and supplier markets. Improvement in business accessibility was measures both by improved access to labor and customer markets, as well as to buyer and supplier markets. Concepts F2 and H2 were the best performers, with scores above 98. Four other routes (H1, F1, B2, and K) perform well, with scores above 80. Following this group, there is a significant drop in scores.
- Family 7-Long Term Economic Growth. Southwest Indiana, along with the rest of Indiana, lags in indicators of long-term economic growth. This family of measures looks at indicators of employment, income, and sales. B2 ranks first on this measure by a significant amount. Six other concepts have scores above 80. In order, these are N, C2, H2, F2, L2, and D.
- Family 8 Social Distribution of Economic Benefits. These performance measures determine the distribution of benefits which would be stimulated by an Interstate highway. Employment, demographic, and income variables comprise this family. At this level of analysis, econometric modeling could be done for only seven of the alternatives, and routes were grouped with others which were geographically similar, as well as which had similar user benefits. Routes which use SR 37 (B2, C2, D, F2, H2, L2, and N) tend to perform the best. Close to these in performance were routes using the SR 39 corridor (B1, H1, and L1) as well as Route K. After this, there is a sharp drop off in the performance of alternatives.

National I-69 Families of Performance Measures

There are two goals to support the National I-69 project. The discussion pertaining to these two goals follows.

- Canada to Mexico as a high priority corridor on the National Highway System. Based on that designation, the Federal Highway Administration has established the national policy that the I-69 corridor should promote interstate and international trade. Promoting this federal policy for the Indiana portion of this national project has been adopted as a core goal. All alternatives satisfy the design compatibility criteria related to this goal (an interstate highway with termini at Evansville and Indianapolis). Each alternative was rated by the degree to which it facilitates truck traffic, as measured by truck vehicle-hours saved in 2025. Route K performs the best, primarily because of its effect on reducing congestion on I-65 south of Indianapolis (which is an important need, but one that is only tangentially related to the objectives of this project). Route F2 is the second best, with a weighted score of 85. No other alternative has a score above 80.
- Family 10 Intermodal Connectivity. Another goal of the National I-69 project is to facilitate intermodal freight movements. To rate the routes, an accessibility to major intermodal centers was computed for each. Indices were weighted by Year 2000 net intermodal tonnage served at each facility. Two concepts, F1 and H1, have scores over 90. There are three others (F2, J and C1) which score in the 80's.

Capital and Operating Cost

In addition to the Purpose and Need Performance Measures, the routes were rated by their capital and operating costs. Capital costs include road surface, road base, earthwork, retaining walls, bridges, right of way, engineering, right-of-way, relocations, earth removal, signing, lighting, rest areas, and maintenance of traffic. Operating and maintenance costs include minor pavement repairs, shoulder repairs, pavement marking upkeep, litter removal, mowing and weed control, guardrail upkeep, fencing upkeep, signage upkeep, snow removal, ice control, pavement resurfacing, bridge painting, bridge deck and joint repairs, maintenance of miscellaneous structures, and added state police patrols.

For all concepts, capital costs ranged from a low of \$800 million to a high of \$2.1 billion. The ranges for the alternatives recommended for further study are:

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Alternative 1 (Route Concept A) - ranging from $0.81 to $1.06 billion Alternative 4 (Route Concept J) - ranging from $0.98 to $1.14 billion Alternative 3 (Route Concept F) - ranging from $1.14 to $1.57 billion Alternative 2 (Route Concept C) - ranging from $1.15 to $1.75 billion Alternative 5 (Route Concept L) - ranging from $1.40 to $1.65 billion
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Route Concept A has an increase in operating and maintenance costs which is only a fraction of other alternatives. It is approximately \$300,000 annually. All other alternatives result in annual increases ranging from \$1.5 million to over \$3 million.

Screening Framework

Each route was grouped by geographic area, and then rated by its performance on each family of performance measures. Table 6 in the Screening Report summarizes this tabulation. The score for each alternative is represented by stars (for performance measures) and dollar signs (for cost measures). The number of stars or dollar signs represents the quintile in which each route's performance is found. It a route performed between 80 and 100 on a performance measure, it receives 5 stars; between 60 and 80, it receives four stars; etc. In the case of performance measures, more stars are good. For the cost measurements, fewer dollar signs are good. If a route's costs were in the lowest 20%, it received one dollar sign, etc.

Following this rating process, judgments were made about which alternatives to keep. These were made in two steps. First, in each geographic grouping, clearly inferior alternatives were eliminated. Considering both performance and cost, alternatives were eliminated if they had a significant weakness compared with others in their group. Alternatives not eliminated in the first step were then consolidated into hybrid alternatives if they were very similar in concept - for example, Route Concepts C1 and C2 were consolidated into Alternative 2.

Point 3 - Five Alternatives Recommended for Detailed Study

Five Alternatives are recommended for detailed study. They are show in maps in the attached Power Point presentation, along with some key factors which led to their being recommended. During the review of the factors related to Alternative 1, Sweson Yang, stated that its level of support from various interest groups should not be included as one of the selection criteria, since it is unrelated to Purpose and Need.

Point 4 - Next Steps in the Study Process

This meeting is part of a series of meetings designed to seek public and consulting party input. Once this input is received and alternatives are finalized, the next step will be to define an approximately 2000-foot-wide corridor for each alternative. Within each corridor, a "working alignment" 350 to 400 feet in width will be specified. This working alignment will be the Study's Team determination as to where a highway could be located within each corridor. This working alignment will be used to forecast the impact of a highway within that corridor.

In mid-2002, the Study Team plans to publish a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). The DEIS will document the likely impacts of each of the remaining alternatives. Official public hearings will be conducted to receive public and agency input on its findings.

Then by late 2002, we will incorporate all input received and publish a Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS). The FEIS will recommend a single corridor. This will bring the Study Team to the conclusion of the Tier 1 EIS.

It is important to note that the analysis done to date on the Transportation, Economic, National I-69, and Cost factors will be carried forward. These evaluations, along with environmental factors, will be considered in their totality in making a final decision about a route for I-69.

QUESTIONS/COMMENTS ON SCREENING OF ALTERNATIVES PRESENTATION

The comments regarding the Screening of Alternatives were made during the presentation, as noted. No additional comments of substance were made after the presentation.

PREVIEW OF LEVEL 3 ANALYSIS TECHNIQUES

David Isley and Thomas Cervone then presented for everyone's feedback some of the major tools which will be used in the Level 3 Impacts Analysis. They presented a draft version of a GIS Atlas which will be prepared for each of the route alternatives.

This GIS Atlas is a series of maps which displays information which will be critical for the screening of alternatives. On each map, there is a two-mile wide study band, within which the 2000 foot wide project corridor and the 350 - 400 foot wide working alignment will be located.

Kia Gillette described the map's color-coded features. Certain features are sited on the maps, and other features (such as cave entrances, threatened and endangered species) are described without showing a specific location.

The basic portrayal of each alternative begins with the two mile wide study band. As impacts are identified, the corridor and/or working alignment may be modified to avoid them. If necessary, the two mile wide study band could also be moved to avoid a major impact.

Ms. Gillette and Dr. Cervone also presented large display maps showing the major physiographic regions of Southwest Indiana, along with photographs showing, as reference, typical features of those regions. The five alternatives are overlaid on this map. Different alternatives will have impacts upon very different types of physiographic regions.

Mr. Isley and Dr. Cervone also discussed the pending release of GIS information on the Internet, using the Indiana Geological Society's web site. It will enable users to view as well as superimpose certain layers. However, they will be unable to have full access to the GIS layers, which would allow them to modify the GIS information, until a later point in time.

QUESTIONS/COMMENTS ON PREVIEW OF LEVEL 3 ANALYSIS TECHNIQUES

Rose Zigenfus asked how current the aerial photos are which are being used for this study. Dave Isley stated that they were taken in 1999. Rose suggested that there are many areas in Evansville, and elsewhere as well, where much development has occurred since then. Dave Isley noted that we have provision in the study for taking newer aerial photos, as needed.

Several also suggested data presented in the atlas be tabulated in greater detail. Specifically, for each page, impacts should be enumerated at the working alignment level and the 2000-foot corridor level.

Sweson Yang noted that where an alternative feeds traffic into I-465 is a major issue which the Indianapolis MPO will have to view closely.

CONCLUSIONS - VINCE BERNARDIN

Vince Bernardin thanked everyone for taking the time to participate, and for their contributions to the Study process. He stated that any additional comments should be submitted no later than January 16, 2002. These should be addressed to Michael Grovak, the consultant project manager.

Page 1

This meeting was held in Indiana Government Center North, Room N755. Attendees included:

Wilma Marine Hoosier National Forest

Michaela Kendall Indiana Department of Commerce
Jason Rodocker Indiana Department of Commerce

David Parry Indiana Department of Environmental Management

Karie Brudis Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Historic Preservation &

Archaeology

John Carr Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Historic Preservation &

Archaeology

John Steinmetz Indiana Geological Survey

Gerry Newell United States Army Corps of Engineers
Doug Shelton United States Army Corps of Engineers

Virginia Laszewski United States Environmental Protection Agency Ken Westlake United States Environmental Protection Agency

Mike Litwin United States Fish & Wildlife Service

William Malley Akin, Gump, Strauss, Hauer & Feld Vincent Bernardin Bernardin, Lochmueller & Associates Thomas Cervone Bernardin, Lochmueller & Associates Kia Gillette Bernardin, Lochmueller & Associates Michael Grovak Bernardin, Lochmueller & Associates David Islev Bernardin, Lochmueller & Associates John Baxter Federal Highway Administration Anthony DeSimone Federal Highway Administration Robert Dirks Federal Highway Administration

Tim Miller HNTB Corporation

Pankaj Desai Indiana Department of Transportation
Vaneeta Kumar Indiana Department of Transportation
Janice Osadczuk Indiana Department of Transportation
Lyle Sadler Indiana Department of Transportation

Linda Weintraut Weintraut & Associates

INTRODUCTION - VINCE BERNARDIN

Vince Bernardin's introductory remarks described the purposes of this meeting. The two main purposes were:

- To present the screening of alternatives process and results.
- To introduce the Level 3 environmental analysis.

Mr. Bernardin began by discussing the analytical methods used in the screening of alternatives process. A printed copies of the Power Point presentation used to accompany both his and Mr. Michael Grovak's remarks is available upon request.

Main points in the discussion of analytical methods included:

- The analysis used state of the art techniques in travel demand modeling, applied regional geography, GIS technology, and regional economics. Methods are those developed by INDOT to evaluate all large-scale projects. These methods were applied consistently to evaluate all alternatives.
- These techniques are "blind" with regard to the type of corridor improvement contemplated (new facility vs. upgrade). For example, when these techniques were applied to the US 31 Corridor Study, they indicated that it was more beneficial to pursue upgrading existing US 31, rather than relocating it on a new alignment.
- There are two main technical tools used in this analysis. They are a travel demand model (Indiana Statewide Travel Model) and the econometric forecasting model (Regional Economic Model Inc., or REMI). These models are connected by two analytical bridges. First, the output of the travel model is post-processed to compute user benefits, which provides input into the econometric model. Second, population and employment growth estimates from the REMI model are fed back into the travel model as changed land use forecasts, which result in changes in the number of trips and trip patterns in the highway network. The first analytical bridge (feeding user benefits into the economic forecasting model) was used in the Screening of Alternatives, just completed. The second analytical bridge (feeding population and employment growth estimates back into the travel model) will be implemented in the Level 3 environmental impact analysis.
- The travel demand model consists of a network which encompasses all of Indiana, as well as significant parts of Michigan, Illinois, Kentucky, and Ohio. Further, it has been developed

within the framework of a geographic information system (GIS). This allows spatial relationship to be understood, as well as the computation of accessibility measures.

SCREENING OF ALTERNATIVES - MICHAEL GROVAK

Mike Grovak's portion of the presentation covered four points. These were:

- The Screening Framework, Including both the Purpose and Need as well as Other Factors
- The Screening Process
- Description of 5 Alternatives Recommended for Detailed Study
- Next Steps in the Study Process

Point 1 - The Screening Framework

The Draft Purpose and Need Statement documented a number of needs in Southwest Indiana, and also identified performance measures which could be used to evaluate how well different routes addressed those needs. The project goals and performance measures supporting those goals are based upon the Draft Statement of Purpose and Need, issued April 17, 2001, as well as input received on that Draft Statement from the public and consulting parties. A revised Purpose and Need Statement, which reflects this input, will be included in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for this project.

In addition to Purpose and Need Criteria, two other important considerations were used in the screening of alternatives. These were the cost of each alternative (both capital costs and ongoing operating and maintenance costs) as well as geographic diversity. Alternatives were evaluated within geographic groups. Thus, some route concepts which were not carried forward were better performers on many criteria than other routes which were carried forward.

Point 2 - The Screening Process

The 14 Route Concepts were grouped geographically. There groups, and their characteristics, are as follows:

• Western Group (3 routes). These follow US 41 for a significant distance, include a connection to Vincennes, and do not serve the Bloomington area.

- Central Group serving Bloomington (5 routes). Most of these follow SR 57 for a significant distance, serve Bloomington and (with one exception) also serve Washington.
- Central Group not serving Bloomington (3 routes). These generally follow a middle course, staying east of US 41 but west of Bloomington. Two serve Washington, but none serve Vincennes or Bloomington.
- Eastern Group (3 routes). These serve the eastern part of the study area. All serve Bloomington. In addition, two serve Bedford, and one serve Brown county.

Nearly all route concepts performed well on at least one performance measure. However, the Study Team is looking at them in their entirety in order to arrive at a decision. Whatever route is chosen will cost in the neighborhood of \$1 billion, or more. A responsible decision must consider all factors.

Three categories of performance measures were used to evaluate the route concepts. The three categories correspond to the three aspects of the project's purpose and need - transportation in Southwest Indiana; economic development in Southwest Indiana; and completion of the National I-69 Project.

The three categories included a total of ten "families" of performance measures. There were four families of performance measures in the "transportation" category; four in the "economic development" category; and two more in the "National I-69" category.

The performance of the route alternatives within each family of performance factors was discussed. Prior to this discussion, the use of scaled scores in evaluating alternatives was presented. The basis for using scaled scores is as follows.

Most of the factors used measured different transportation or economic variables. Accordingly, they are quantified in different units of measurement. For example, proximity measures are tabulations of the population within a specific number of minutes of a city or some other important destination, with the number of people being the unit of measurement. On the other hand, safety data are measured by the number of vehicular crashes, and business cost savings are measured in dollars. Further, in some cases (such as travel time) less is better; in other cases (such as job creation) more is better. To simplify the analysis and reduce these potential sources of confusion, all performance measures have been converted from their original units to a value which has been scaled from 0 to 100. Further, all performance measures in which "less is better" have been inverted and scaled on the same 0 - 100 yardstick. In other words, the alternative with the poorest score is always indexed to 0, and the one with the best score is always indexed to 100. This allows for simple comparisons

between very different types of measures, and also provides more information than simply ranking the alternatives.

For most families of alternatives, there are multiple performance measures which are considered in arriving at the overall score for that family of alternatives. The scaled scores for each family are computed by taking the average scaled scores on all alternatives, and renormalizing them on a scale of 0 - 100.

Transportation Families of Performance Measures

There were four families of transportation alternative performance measures, related to the four transportation goals in the Purpose and Need Statement. The discussion pertaining to the four families follows.

- Family 1 Connection Between Evansville and Indianapolis. This family of measures deal with how well each alternative improves the connection between Evansville and Indianapolis. This was identified in the Purpose and Need as a core objective for the project. Six route concepts scored fairly high, with scores of 80 or above. In order, they were F1, F2, H1 J, I, and H2. After these six top performers, there is a significant drop in scores.
- Family 2 Personal Accessibility. This family deals with how well each alternative improves regional connectivity. This was identified in the Purpose and Need as a core objective for this project. There were three subfamilies of indicators comprising this family. These subfamilies include accessibility indices, proximity tabulations, and vehicle miles on major highways. Route concepts which directly serve major population centers in Southwest Indiana tend to perform the best on this measures. The top ranking alternatives are H2, H1, B2, N, B1, F2, L2, and L1. After the 9th ranked alternative (D), there is a significant drop in accessibility scores.
- Family 3 Traffic Congestion. The Purpose and Need did not find that congestion would be a significant problem in the Study Area, but there will be localized spots where congestion will be a problem. Accordingly, congestion relief is a goal for the study, but not a core goal. Concept K stands out as the best performer, since it helps to relieve serious congestion on I65. Other alternatives which use the State Road 37 corridor, including B2, F2, L2, H2, and B1, tend to do well for the same reason. Other routes perform significantly poorer.
- Family 4 Traffic Safety. The Purpose and Need identified areas of rural Southwest Indiana which have significantly higher crash rates than rural Indiana as a whole. While this

safety objective is a legitimate need, it is not of such a magnitude as to warrant being designated as a core objective. Performance scores for this alternative measure the reduction in fatal, injury, and property damage only accidents for each alternative. Seven route concepts performed very high by these measures. In order, they were D, N, B2, L2, H2, F2, C2, and L1. Following these, there is a significant drop off in route performance.

Economic Families of Performance Measures

There were four families of economic performance measures, related to the four economic performance goals in the Purpose and Need Statement. The discussion pertaining to these four families follows:

- Family 5 Monetary Cost Reductions. Most surface transportation project have a direct effect on the economy beyond the costs of transportation and maintenance. These include 1) time saved, 2) changes in vehicle operating cost, and 3) reductions in traffic accidents. Some of these effects translate into direct economic impacts, changing the flow of dollars in the economy. Time saved on business-related travel has such an effect, as do expenditures for vehicle operating expenses. A portion of safety costs (e.g., auto repair costs) also result in changes in flows of dollars in the economy. Monetary cost savings include that part of user benefits which reduce actual costs, or make money available for other uses. On this family of measures, one alternative (F2) does much better than any other alternative. The next best alternative, H2, has a scaled score of only 79.
- Family 6 Business Accessibility. The Purpose and Need found that Southwest Indiana businesses have comparatively poor accessibility to labor pools, as well as buyer and supplier markets. Improvement in business accessibility was measures both by improved access to labor and customer markets, as well as to buyer and supplier markets. Concepts F2 and H2 were the best performers, with scores above 98. Four other routes (H1, F1, B2, and K) perform well, with scores above 80. Following this group, there is a significant drop in scores.
- Family 7 -Long Term Economic Growth. Southwest Indiana, along with the rest of Indiana, lags in indicators of long-term economic growth. This family of measures looks at indicators of employment, income, and sales. B2 ranks first on this measure by a significant amount. Six other concepts have scores above 80. In order, these are N, C2, H2, F2, L2, and D.

• Family 8 - Social Distribution of Economic Benefits. These performance measures determine the distribution of benefits which would be stimulated by an Interstate highway. Employment, demographic, and income variables comprise this family. At this level of analysis, econometric modeling could be done for only seven of the alternatives, and routes were grouped with others which were geographically similar, as well as which had similar user benefits. Routes which use SR 37 (B2, C2, D, F2, H2, L2, and N) tend to perform the best. Close to these in performance were routes using the SR 39 corridor (B1, H1, and L1) as well as Route K. After this, there is a sharp drop off in the performance of alternatives.

National I-69 Families of Performance Measures

There are two goals to support the National I-69 project. The discussion pertaining to these two goals follows.

- Family 9 Interstate and International Trade. The Congress has designated I-69 from Canada to Mexico as a high priority corridor on the National Highway System. Based on that designation, the Federal Highway Administration has established the national policy that the I-69 corridor should promote interstate and international trade. Promoting this federal policy for the Indiana portion of this national project has been adopted as a core goal. All alternatives satisfy the design compatibility criteria related to this goal (an interstate highway with termini at Evansville and Indianapolis). Each alternative was rated by the degree to which it facilitates truck traffic, as measured by truck vehicle-hours saved in 2025. Route K performs the best, primarily because of its effect on reducing congestion on I-65 south of Indianapolis (which is an important need, but one that is only tangentially related to the objectives of this project). Route F2 is the second best, with a weighted score of 85. No other alternative has a score above 80.
- Family 10 Intermodal Connectivity. Another goal of the National I-69 project is to facilitate intermodal freight movements. To rate the routes, an accessibility to major intermodal centers was computed for each. Indices were weighted by Year 2000 net intermodal tonnage served at each facility. Two concepts, F1 and H1, have scores over 90. There are three others (F2, J and C1) which score in the 80's.

Capital and Operating Cost

In addition to the Purpose and Need Performance Measures, the routes were rated by their capital and operating costs. Capital costs include road surface, road base, earthwork, retaining walls, bridges, right of way, engineering, right-of-way, relocations, earth removal, signing, lighting, rest areas, and maintenance of traffic. Operating and maintenance costs include minor pavement repairs, shoulder repairs, pavement marking upkeep, litter removal, mowing and weed control, guardrail upkeep, fencing upkeep, signage upkeep, snow removal, ice control, pavement resurfacing, bridge painting, bridge deck and joint repairs, maintenance of miscellaneous structures, and added state police patrols.

For all concepts, capital costs ranged from a low of \$800 million to a high of \$2.1 billion. The ranges for the alternatives recommended for further study are:

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Route Concept A has an increase in operating and maintenance costs which is only a fraction of other alternatives. It is approximately \$300,000 annually. All other alternatives result in annual increases ranging from \$1.5 million to over \$3 million.

Screening Framework

Each route was grouped by geographic area, and then rated by its performance on each family of performance measures. Table 6 in the Screening Report summarizes this tabulation. The score for each alternative is represented by stars (for performance measures) and dollar signs (for cost measures). The number of stars or dollar signs represents the quintile in which each route's performance is found. It a route performed between 80 and 100 on a performance measure, it receives 5 stars; between 60 and 80, it receives four stars; etc. In the case of performance measures, more stars are good. For the cost measurements, fewer dollar signs are good. If a route's costs were in the lowest 20%, it received one dollar sign, etc.

Following this rating process, judgments were made about which alternatives to keep. These were made in two steps. First, in each geographic grouping, clearly inferior alternatives were eliminated. Considering both performance and cost, alternatives were eliminated if they had a significant

weakness compared with others in their group. Alternatives not eliminated in the first step were then consolidated into hybrid alternatives if they were very similar in concept - for example, Route Concepts C1 and C2 were consolidated into Alternative 2.

Point 3 - Five Alternatives Recommended for Detailed Study

Five Alternatives are recommended for detailed study. They are show in maps in the attached Power Point presentation, along with some key factors which led to their being recommended.

At this stage of the meeting, the Study Team pointed out that the numbering of Alternatives on page 37 of the Alternatives Screening Report contains an error: the alternative referred to as Alternative 3 is actually Alternative 4, and vice-versa. All participants were asked to make a note of this correction in order to avoid any confusion in the future.

Point 4 - Next Steps in the Study Process

This meeting is part of a series of meetings designed to seek public and consulting party input. Once this input is received and alternatives are finalized, the next step will be to define an approximately 2000-foot-wide corridor for each alternative. Within each corridor, a "working alignment" 350 to 400 feet in width will be specified. This working alignment will be the Study's Team determination as to where a highway could be located within each corridor. This working alignment will be used to forecast the impact of a highway within that corridor.

In mid-2002, the Study Team plans to publish a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). The DEIS will document the likely impacts of each of the remaining alternatives. Official public hearings will be conducted to receive public and agency input on its findings.

Then by late 2002, we will incorporate all input received and publish a Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS). The FEIS will recommend a single corridor. This will bring the Study Team to the conclusion of the Tier 1 EIS.

It is important to note that the analysis done to date on the Transportation, Economic, National I-69, and Cost factors will be carried forward. These evaluations, along with environmental factors, will be considered in their totality in making a final decision about a route for I-69.

QUESTIONS/COMMENTS ON SCREENING OF ALTERNATIVES PRESENTATION

Ken Westlake of USEPA asked about assumptions underlying the forecasts of congestion relief. Specifically, what capacities were assumed on I-65 and I-70? Mike Grovak replied that, in accordance with INDOT's long range plan, both I-65 and I-70 were assumed to have at least six lanes (three in each direction) between Indianapolis and Louisville/Terre Haute.

Mike Litwin of US Fish & Wildlife asked how environmental considerations entered into determining and/or screening the route concepts. Mike Grovak stated that as is the procedure for environmental impact statements, a broad range of alternatives were first determined and evaluated on Purpose and Need criteria. Geographic diversity is a proxy for environmental considerations, in that by ensuring that alternatives are geographically diverse, they do not run the risk of sharing a single, major environmental problem. Vince Bernardin added that in scoping the alternatives, the Study Team was well aware of many avoidance areas, as a result of the extensive work that has been undertaken to develop the GIS mapping, and pointed out that the study team will take care to avoid sensitive resources in determining the locations of the two-mile-wide study bands and the 200-footwide corridors for the five alternatives.

Ken Westlake asked for more detail about how alternatives were screened, in particular how relative weights were assigned to various alternatives. Vince Bernardin stated that the Study Team performed a variety of sensitivity analyses, testing both differing weights on cost and performance factors, as well as different geographic groupings. This analysis showed that, except in the most extreme of weighting or grouping schemes, that the Alternatives which passed through the screening tended to be the same or very similar. This indicates that both the cost and performance factors, as well as the geographic groupings, provide a rather robust framework for analyzing route alternatives.

The question was raised about the deadline for agency comments. Based upon a two month time frame after consulting agencies received their information packets for review, the date of Wednesday, January 16, 2002, was established as the deadline for the submission of comments.

PREVIEW OF LEVEL 3 ANALYSIS TECHNIQUES

David Isley and Thomas Cervone then presented for everyone's feedback some of the major tools which will be used in the Level 3 Impacts Analysis. They presented a draft version of a GIS Atlas which will be prepared for each of the route alternatives.

This GIS Atlas is a series of maps which displays information which will be critical for the screening of alternatives. On each map, there is a two-mile wide study band, within which the 2000 foot wide project corridor and the 350 - 400 foot wide working alignment will be located.

Kia Gillette described the map's color-coded features. Certain features are sited on the maps, and other features (such as cave entrances, threatened and endangered species) are described without showing a specific location.

The basic portrayal of each alternative begins with the two mile wide study band. As impacts are identified, the corridor and/or working alignment may be modified to avoid them. If necessary, the two mile wide study band could also be moved to avoid a major impact.

Ms. Gillette and Dr. Cervone also presented large display maps showing the major physiographic regions of Southwest Indiana, along with photographs showing, as reference, typical features of those regions. The five alternatives are overlaid on this map. Different alternatives will have impacts upon very different types of physiographic regions.

John Steinmetz, Mr. Isley and Dr. Cervone also discussed the pending release of GIS information on the Internet, using the Indiana Geological Society's web site. It will enable users to view as well as superimpose certain layers. However, they will be unable to have full access to the GIS layers, which would allow them to modify the GIS information, until a later point in time. Janice Osadczuk pointed out that layers which contain privileged information, such as archaeology, threatened and endangered species, and cave entrances, will not be available.

Finally, Mr. Isley and Dr. Cervone discussed one or more tours which the Study Team would like to conduct with review agencies to acquaint them with environmentally sensitive areas situated near potential alternatives. Agency representatives would meet with individuals who oversee or are familiar with each environmentally sensitive area. Tentatively, this tour or tours will occur in March or April.

QUESTIONS/COMMENTS ON PREVIEW OF LEVEL 3 ANALYSIS TECHNIQUES

Ken Westlake mentioned that he would not expect to see environmental "red flags" located in the 2000' corridors. Tom Cervone agreed, saying that the strategy in locating the corridors is "avoid, avoid, avoid" with respect to sensitive environmental locations.

Virginia Laszewski of USEPA raised the issue of the "meeting up" of the south end of this project with the north end of the I-69, Evansville to Henderson project. After some informative discussion, the Study Team agreed that it was the appropriate time to confer with the Study Team for the other I-69 project in Indiana. Tim Miller, HNTB Project Manager for I-69 Evansville to Henderson project, was present. He conferred with the Study Team after the meeting, and it was agreed that a conference call to address this issued would be scheduled in the near future.

Virginia Laszewski asked whether the GIS contained well-head protected areas. John Steinmetz of the Indiana Geological Society said this information will be added to the GIS soon.

When asked about secondary and cumulative impacts, **Tom Cervone** stated that shortly the Study Team would provide a methodology paper to USEPA outlining our proposed methodology. He also stated that the Study Team feels that impacts upon farmland, forests, wetlands, and threatened & endangered species will be the principal focus of this analysis.

William Malley mentioned that the Study Team also is finalizing paper to be used as the basis of discussion with the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation. The purpose of this paper and subsequent discussions is to agree upon a procedure to integrate the requirements of Section 106 this tiered NEPA study. Virginia Laszewski asked if American Indian tribal interests had been consulted. Tom Cervone mentioned that there are no tribal lands within the Study Area, so there is no Tribal Historic Preservation Officer to contact. However, a number of tribes with historic interests in the Study Area have been contacted, and several have indicated that they wish to be consulting parties for the Section 106 process. In all, about 80 individuals, such as public officials and county historians, are designated as consulting parties.

David Parry of the Indiana Department of Environmental Management cited new storm water rules. These suggest that the widths of working alignments need to be wide enough to allow for more runoff at the bottom of hills. Virginia Laszewski asked about designated uses for certain streams. Tom Cervone stated that we have an "impaired streams" layer in the GIS which will provide this information. Virginia also suggested that the DEIS identify possible wetland mitigation sites.

Virginia Laszewski and Ken Westlake both asked if it is the Study Team's position that each of the five alternatives satisfy the Purpose and Need. Vince Bernardin said, that yes, they all do, but

to varying degrees. This issue was addressed specifically in the Alternatives Analysis Report at page 30, which states that:

"Finally, it is important to add a caveat regarding subsequent stages of the environmental analysis. In general, alternatives are carried forward for detailed study in an EIS only if they clearly satisfy the project's objectives, as defined in the purpose and need statement. In this case, the desire to carry forward a geographically diverse range means that the performance of certain alternatives is marginal on certain performance measures - including measures related to core project objectives. Despite their weaknesses, these marginal alternatives are being carried forward; however, the possibility still exists that one or more of these alternatives will ultimately be found to be unreasonable. Also, the fact that an alternative is being carried forward at this stage does not signify that FHWA and INDOT consider that alternative to be prudent or practicable for purposes of any applicable resource-protection statutes.

Ms. Laszewski and Mr. Westlake also asked whether it was possible to "bring back" an alternatives. They specifically suggested that since I and J were rated so closely, and I varies from J only by its routing to I-70, that I be retained as a variation of J. **Vince Bernardin** said that the Study Team could do that, and would consider doing so.

CONCLUSIONS - VINCE BERNARDIN

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Vince Bernardin thanked everyone for taking the time to participate, and for their contributions to the Study process. He reminded everyone that any additional comments should be submitted no later than January 16, 2002. These should be addressed to Michael Grovak, the consultant project manager.

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COORDINATION MEETING WITH USEPA NOVEMBER 8, 2001

MEETING SUMMARY

Introduction

A meeting was held on Thursday, November 8, at 12:00 pm in the executive offices of the Indiana Department of Transportation, in Room N755 of Indiana Government Center, North. It was called by the Indiana Division Administrator of the Federal Highway Administration, John Baxter. Its purpose was to receive feedback from the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) regarding the Draft Purpose and Need Statement for the I-69, Evansville to Indianapolis Study. Attendees at this meeting included:

John Baxter FHWA, Division Administrator, Indiana

Gary White FHWA, Assistant Division Administrator, Indiana

Kelly Whiteman

Janice Osadczuk

Steve Smith

INDOT, Deputy Commissioner and Chief Legal Counsel
INDOT, Chief - Environment, Planning, and Engineering
INDOT, Manager, Transportation Planning Section

Ken Westlake USEPA, Chief, Environmental Planning and Evaluation Branch, Region 5

Virginia Laszewski USEPA, Environmental Scientist, Region 5

William Malley
Vincent Bernardin
Michael Grovak

Akin, Gump, Strauss, Hauer & Feld (Legal Counsel to INDOT)
Bernardin, Lochmueller & Associates (Consultant to INDOT)
Bernardin, Lochmueller & Associates (Consultant to INDOT)

Background

The development of the Draft Purpose and Need Statement for the Evansville-to-Indianapolis section of I-69 has been a lengthy process, which has involved numerous agency coordination meetings, public involvement meetings, and draft documents and presentation materials. The following chronology summarizes major points in this process to date:

November 18, 1998: INDOT issued a press release announcing a new I-69 study. The press release announced that the study would analyze a broad range of highway connections between Evansville and Indianapolis. It stated that the new study would consider the following three objectives: strengthening the highway network in southwest Indiana; supporting economic development in southwest Indiana; and facilitating the completion of the National I-69 project.

May 18, 1999: An early coordination meeting regarding the new study was held in Indianapolis. The meeting was attended by State and Federal environmental review agencies. Briefing materials presented a number of discussion issues. Issue 1 was "Purpose and Need" for the new DEIS. It stated as a "tentative position" that there would be at least three purposes which the new study would consider. These purposes included "Providing a critical missing link in the statewide transportation network;" "stimulating economic growth throughout southwestern Indiana, not just in certain rural counties:" and "completing the Indiana portion of federally designated 'high priority' Corridor 18."

January 5, 2000: FHWA published a Notice of Intent in the Federal Register, announcing the new preparation of the Tier 1 EIS for the Evansville-to-Indianapolis section of I-69. The notice described elements of the Purpose and Need for the project. It included the following statements: "This proposed action is intended to strengthen the highway network in Southwest Indiana by providing improved linkages among the existing highway routes in the region and by providing more direct connections among the region's major population centers."; "By strengthening the highway network, this proposed action is intended to stimulate economic growth in Southwest Indiana by enhancing access to existing centers of economic activity and creating new opportunities where possible."; and "This proposed action is intended to complete the Indiana portion of Corridor 18, a strategic, high priority highway serving east-central United States."

February 3, 2000: The agency scoping meeting for the study was held in INDOT's Greenfield District Offices near Indianapolis. In the presentation, three general purposes were proposed for the study's Purpose and Need. These include "strengthening the transportation system in Southwestern Indiana," "Stimulating economic growth in Southwestern Indiana," and "Completion of Indiana portion of Corridor 18 (I-69)". USEPA participated actively in this meeting; Michael MacMullen, Manager of Federal Activities Programs in USEPA Region 5 (Chicago, IL) suggested that a route be added to those presented for consideration. This suggestion was added to the routes to be studied, and became designated as Route Concept D. Virginia Laszewski, Environmental Scientist in USEPA Region 5, also attended this meeting.

August 9, 2000: The Study Team released the Purpose and Need Discussion Paper. The paper invited public comments on ten issues organized into three categories. These categories, and their associated issues, included Transportation Issues (Travel between Indianapolis and Evansville, Personal Accessibility, Travel Efficiency, and Safety), Economic Issues (Business Costs, Business Accessibility, Sustainable Economic Development, and Widely-Distributed Economic Benefits), and Corridor 18 Issues (Characteristics Required for the Corridor 18 Facility and Efficient Movement of Freight and People). The paper was (and is) posted on the official project web site.

August 22, 2000: The Study Team, including INDOT, FHWA, and consultant staff, met with USEPA staff in USEPA's Chicago offices. Attendees from USEPA included Michael MacMullen, Manager of Federal Activities Programs in USEPA Region 5 (Chicago, IL), and Virginia Laszewski, Environmental Scientist in Region 5. Ms. Laszewski raised the following points:

- She questioned including any goals related to the National I-69 project. Specifically, in the absence of an EIS on the National I-69 project which documented the need for it, as well as assessing the likely impacts, including such justification as part of this project's Purpose and Need is not warranted. In the absence of such a national EIS, she questioned whether completion the Indian portion of the National I-69 corridor can be identified as a goal of this project.
- She felt that a very broad range of alternatives should be considered. In addition to highway, she suggested consideration of freight rail, passenger rail, and non-motorized transportation.
- She noted that the Discussion Paper does not include supporting data.

• She questioned whether it was appropriate to include policies adopted as part of Indiana's Statewide Planning Process.

In conclusion, Mr. MacMullen and Ms. Laszewski indicated their desire that needs be adequately documented, and that appropriate performance measures related to these needs be determined. Mr. MacMullen indicted his desire to be "timely and forthright" in providing feedback to INDOT and the Study Team.

August 28-30, 2000: Three public meetings were held to receive public input regarding the Purpose and Need Discussion Paper. These meetings were held in the Indiana cities of Vincennes, Jasper, and Indianapolis. Three hundred eighteen (318) individuals registered as attendees at these meetings, and 104 individuals made public comments at the meetings. In addition, dozens of written comments were received and reviewed by the Study Team.

October 3, 2000: A telephone conversation took place between the Study Team's Consultant Project Manager Michael Grovak, and Michael MacMullen of USEPA. He offered input on the Purpose and Need, which included the importance of clarity of presentation to a wide variety of audiences. Mr. MacMullen also stated that the I-69 project is at the top of USEPA's agenda, and has a level of interest which USEPA cannot give to every project.

December 8, 2000: The Federal Highway Administration publishes Announcement of I-69 Status in the Federal Register. The notice states, "The Purpose of this announcement is to provide information on the status of Interstate 69, a transcontinental highway corridor designated by the U.S. Congress to extend from the U.S./Canadian border to the U.S./Mexican border." The notice also states, "The Statement of Purpose and Need identified benefits to the Nation that have been shown to outweigh the costs of providing the transportation facility. These benefits are related to system linkage, capacity, transportation demand, economic development, modal/freight interrelationships, safety, and roadway deficiencies. Studies considering alternative transportation modal choices have identified that an interstate highway facility would best meet the needs as identified."

April 3, 2001: INDOT and BLA representatives provided a preliminary briefing to Region 5 USEPA officials Ken Westlake (Chief, Environmental Planning and Evaluation Branch) and Michael MacMullen (Manager of Federal Activities Programs) regarding the contents of the Purpose and Need Statement, prior to the public release of the document. This briefing was given at USEPA's Chicago offices, and lasted approximately two hours. The stated purpose of the meeting was to explain the overall approach of the Purpose and Need Statement and to determine whether USEPA had any major concerns or objections. In that meeting, USEPA was informed about the contents and major findings of the Draft Purpose and Need Statement, using an extensive (approximately 70 slide) Power Point presentation. At this time, USEPA staff stated they generally were comfortable with the direction the Study Team took to formulate the Draft Purpose and Need Statement, and they raised no objections to the overall approach.

April 17, 2001: INDOT and FHWA publicly released the Draft Purpose and Need Statement. It is posted on the project web site.

April 18, 2001: INDOT transmitted the Draft Purpose and Need Statement to each of the resource agency representatives involved in the study process, including Michael MacMullen of USEPA. In

the letter that accompanied the draft report, INDOT invited the resource agency representatives to attend an agency coordination meeting on May 18, 2001. (Due to a scheduling conflict, that meeting was rescheduled for June 5, 2001, as stated in a letter dated April 25, 2001.) As described in the letter, the primary purpose of the coordination meeting was to receive resource agency comments on the Draft Purpose and Need Statement.

April 30, 3001: INDOT releases Summary of Comments Received – Purpose and Need Discussion Paper. It highlights the input which was received on the Discussion paper, and describes how this input was considered in formulating the Draft Purpose and Need Statement. Thirty five (35) separate issues are listed, grouped under five major subject headings (Local Economic Goals, National I-69 Project, Regional Economic Goals, Screening Methods, and Transportation Goals). The report is posted on the project web site.

June 5, 2001: An agency review meeting to discuss the Purpose and Need Statement was held on June 5, 2001. Michael MacMullen of USEPA did not attend, due to a scheduling conflict. In an exchange of emails between team member Michael Grovak and Mr. MacMullen, dated May 31, 2001, Mr. Grovak repeated the study team's invitation to USEPA to participate. Mr. Grovak suggested that Mr. Westlake attend if Mr. MacMullen were unable to. Mr. MacMullen replied with his regrets that USEPA could not participate, but stated that he was looking forward to receiving and commenting on the meeting notes.

June 20, 2001: BLA transmitted a written summary of the June 5, 2001 Agency Review Meeting, including copies of all Power Point presentations, to each of the resource agency representatives involved in the study process, including Michael MacMullen of USEPA. The summary included thirteen pages summarizing what was covered at the meeting, as well as seventeen pages giving the complete text of all Power Point presentations.

In the discussion following the presentation of the findings of the Draft Purpose and Need Statement, no questions were raised by any of the invited agencies or MPO's. Several issues were raised by a member of the Bloomington City Council, who also attended the meeting. These questions were with regard to the relationship between highways and economic development. No other questions about any other aspect of the Purpose and Need were raised.

In the weeks which followed, no comments were received from USEPA regarding the Draft Purpose and Need Statement, of the summary of the June 5, 2001 Agency Review Meeting.

August 27, 2001: After receiving information that Mr. MacMullen had transferred to another Federal Agency Mr. Grovak contacted Ms. Laszewski at USEPA by telephone to determine if USEPA had any additional comments to offer on the Purpose and Need.

September 7, 2001: Mr. Grovak spoke with Ms. Laszewski for approximately 3 hours regarding the Draft Purpose and Need Statement.

September 11, 2001: Mr. Grovak transmitted a written summary of the September 7, 2001 telephone conference to Ms. Laszewski.

September 13, 2001: Ms. Laszewski transmitted to Mr. Grovak proposed changes to the summary of the September 7, 2001 telephone conference, in the form of a red-lined draft of that document.

October 24, 2001: Steve Cecil, INDOT Deputy Commissioner for Planning and Intermodal Transportation, wrote a letter to Ms. Laszewski, giving further feedback on several items stated in her September 13, 2001 summary of her conversation with Mr. Grovak regarding Purpose and Need. This letter addressed the appropriate role for economic development as a goal for this project, the relationship between NEPA and policy decisions of the Congress and Federal Agencies, and the size of the I-69 project study area.

November 8, 2001: Mr. Baxter requested a meeting with USEPA and the study team to discuss EPA's position on the Draft Purpose and Need Statement and to resolve any outstanding issues.

Resolution of Purpose and Need Issues

The meeting opened with a general discussion of the events leading up to the meeting, including the history of the development of the Draft Purpose and Need Statement and the comments received on that document from various USEPA officials at different times over the course of the study.

After a wide-ranging discussion, the meeting turned to the specific issues concerning the adequacy of the Purpose and Need Statement. Mr. Westlake was asked whether the USEPA has any fundamental concerns regarding the adequacy of the Draft Purpose and Need Statement – i.e., whether the USEPA believes the Purpose and Need statement could be fatally flawed in some way. Mr. Westlake stated that the USEPA's concerns regarding the Draft Purpose and Need Statement can be addressed through clarification of the existing document and the inclusion of additional information. He stated that the agency does not see any "fatal flaws" in the document, and is not seeking any changes in the definition of the project's objectives. In a related point, Mr. Westlake also was asked whether USEPA felt that INDOT and FHWA had conducted a biased analysis in formulating the Purpose and Need (with a view toward some predetermined outcome). Mr. Westlake stated that USEPA saw no evidence of such bias. In light of Mr. Westlake's comments, Mr. Baxter suggested that the remainder of the meeting focus on how to resolve specific issues raised USEPA. A summary of those issues and their resolution is provided below.

1. Economic Development Objectives

Issue: Is economic development a core objective for this project? Should it be?

Resolution: Economic development will be included as an objective of the proposed action, but not as a core objective. Including economic development as an objective is appropriate because the needs assessment in the Purpose and Need Statement documented economic distress in the study area, and because Indiana's established transportation policies (as reflected in the statewide long range transportation plan) state that the transportation network should be used to support economic growth. At the same time, the decision about how to prioritize the various objectives is a matter that lies within the policy-making discretion of INDOT and FHWA. In this case, INDOT and FHWA have determined that the core objectives are transportation-related – namely, improving Evansville-to-Indianapolis connectivity, improving personal accessibility in Southwest Indiana, and facilitating

the completion of the National I-69 project. Economic development objectives will be pursued as a part of the overall effort to achieve these core transportation objectives.

2. Economic Development Alternatives

Issue: Should non-highway strategies for economic development be analyzed as alternatives?

Resolution: Alternatives that do not involve the completion of an Interstate highway between Evansville and Indianapolis do not satisfy the core objectives of the proposed action and therefore are not reasonable alternatives in the context of this study. For that reason, alternatives that consist solely of economic development incentives (e.g., tax credits) will not be carried forward for detailed study. However, the potential for non-transportation improvements to stimulate economic development was discussed in the Needs Assessment and will be considered as part of the No Build alternative, which will remain under consideration throughout the study.

3. Economic Development – Potential Adverse Economic Impacts

<u>Issue</u>: Will the Tier 1 EIS consider the potential for adverse economic impacts associated with the alternatives?

Resolution: The Tier 1 EIS will consider the potential adverse economic impacts associated with the alternatives that are carried forward for detailed study (i.e., alternatives carried into Level 3 of the alternatives analysis in the Tier 1 EIS). This analysis will consider, within the constraints of existing economic and traffic models, potential adverse impacts such as (1) reduction in income associated with the use of farm and forest land for new highway right-of-way, and (2) reduction in income associated with a reduction in drive-by traffic on existing routes. The study team will coordinate with USEPA and other agencies regarding the methodology for conducing this analysis.

4. Economic Development – Environmental Impacts of Induced Development

<u>Issue</u>: Will the Tier 1 EIS consider the negative environmental impacts associated with economic growth that may be induced by the proposed action? Will a cumulative impacts analysis be done?

Resolution: The Tier 1 EIS will evaluate the cumulative impacts (including induced-development impacts) of the Evansville-to-Indianapolis section of I-69. As part of this cumulative impacts analysis, the study will consider the potential for induced development associated with this section of I-69. The cumulative impacts analysis will estimate, within the constraints of existing economic models, the potential distribution of economic development and its associated impacts within the 26-county study area in Southwest Indiana. No forecasting tool can predict exactly where growth will occur; however, these tools will provide an indication of where growth is likely to occur. The study team will coordinate with USEPA and other agencies regarding the methodology for this analysis.

5. Accessibility Analysis

<u>Issue</u>: What methodology will be used measure personal accessibility? How can regions that have airports (such as Louisville and Evansville) be rated as having comparatively poor accessibility to airports?

Resolution: The Draft Purpose and Need Statement will be revised to include a clearer explanation of the method for calculating the accessibility indices. In particular, it will explain that accessibility measures are based on two elements: "how much" of a particular attraction can be reached from a given area, and "how long" it takes to travel to that attraction. For air travel, accessibility was measured by the number of annual passenger enplanements at each airport. Airports in Evansville and Louisville offer much less access to air travel than airports in Indianapolis and Chicago. Thus, being able to reach the Evansville airport in a short period of time offers less accessibility to air travel than taking somewhat longer to reach the Indianapolis or Chicago airports. This concept will be explained more clearly in the Purpose and Need chapter that is included in the Tier 1 Draft EIS.

6. National I-69 Needs

<u>Issue</u>: What statistical data will be used to describe the need for the National I-69 project?

Resolution: The Purpose and Need Statement in the Tier 1 EIS will be revised to include additional freight-movement data that is currently being developed for the National I-69 Project by consultants under the direction of FHWA headquarters and the eight-state I-69 Steering Committee, of which Indiana is a member. This information is to be available by February, 2002, on schedule to be incorporated in the Purpose and Need Statement in the Draft EIS. This information is to be included in the environmental studies for each of the sections of independent utility (SIUs) that comprise that National I-69 project. (The Evansville-to-Indianapolis section is SIU # 3.)

7. Performance Measures – Absolute Thresholds vs. Relative Measures

<u>Issue</u>: Why doesn't the Purpose and Need Statement define a specific level of improvement that must be achieved in order to accomplish each of the project's objectives? In particular, why doesn't it define an "acceptable" level of Indianapolis-to Evansville connectivity and personal accessibility?

Resolution: Most of the performance measures used in this study are defined in a relative terms, not as absolute thresholds. The use of absolute thresholds is appropriate when there are existing, accepted standards for determining an acceptable condition. For example, when considering traffic congestion, it is widely accepted that a new facility generally should achieve a Level of Service "C" or better in the design year (i.e., 20 years after construction). However, on other issues, there are no such established standards. For example, there are no established standards for determining an "acceptable" level of connectivity between two major cities or an "acceptable" level of personal accessibility in a rural area. When evaluating such issues, the study team has developed relative measures, which allow for a comparison of existing to No Build conditions, as well as a comparison of the relative ability of different alternatives to achieve improvements over those conditions.

Preliminary Discussion of Alternatives Screening and Related Issues

In addition to discussing outstanding issues regarding the Draft Purpose and Need Statement, the study team also provided an overview of the Alternatives Screening Report, which was recently released to the public and will be the subject of an agency coordination meeting on November 27, 2001. Because the alternatives report was just released, no attempt was made in the November 8 meeting to resolve issues regarding that report. Instead, the meeting was used to explain the approach reflected in the report, in order to facilitate EPA's review and comment.

1. Performance Measures – How Relative Measures Are Considered in Screening

<u>Issue</u>: Since there are no absolute standards for determining an acceptable level of performance for a particular objective, then how is that objective considered in the screening process? How can any alternatives be eliminated for "failing" to meet that objective?

Proposed Approach: As described in the Alternatives Analysis Report, which was recently released for public comment, the performance measures were considered collectively when determining which alternatives to carry forward for detailed study. Where absolute thresholds of acceptability existed, they were applied. For example, all alternatives were required to provide an Interstate connection between Evansville and Indianapolis at an acceptable level of service in the design year (LOS C). Where absolute standards of acceptability did not exist, the alternatives were evaluated in terms of their relative performance across a range of performance measures, while also taking into account additional considerations such as geographic diversity and cost. This approach allowed certain alternatives that performed relatively poorly on certain core objectives to be carried forward for detailed study – e.g., Alternative A, which performed relatively poorly on both Indianapolis-to-Evansville connectivity and personal accessibility, was carried forward. (It is now known as "Alternative 1.")

2. "Weight" Given to Core Objectives in Screening

Issue: Are the core objectives being given greater weight in the alternatives screening process?

Proposed Approach: The core objectives of the proposed action were used, in the first instance, to define the set of 14 route concepts that were developed for consideration in the Alternatives Analysis Report. As that report makes clear, all 14 route concepts would result in the completion of an Interstate highway from Evansville to Indianapolis, at an acceptable level of service. (The only exception to this approach was the No Build alternative, which clearly does not meet the project's objectives but must remain under consideration throughout the study as a matter of law.) When screening the 14 route concepts, greater weight was given to the core objectives, as explained in the Alternatives Analysis Report. However, as it turned out, the core objectives were highly correlated with the other objectives. For example, alternatives that performed well on improving Indianapolis-to-Evansville connectivity and personal accessibility (both of which are core objectives) also tended to perform well on improving economic development in Southwest Indiana; similarly, alternatives that performed poorly on those core objectives tended to perform poorly on economic development measures. Thus, as a practical matter, the additional weight given to the core objectives made relatively little difference in the decision about which of the 14 route concept to carry forward for detailed study.

3. Consideration of "Geographic Diversity" in Screening

<u>Issue</u>: How is "geographic diversity" being considered in the alternatives screening process? Why is this factor being considered?

<u>Proposed Approach</u>: As part of the alternatives screening process, the 14 route concepts were grouped into four geographic categories. Alternatives were then compared to their "peers" within the same geographic category. The weakest alternatives within each category were eliminated, and the stronger ones were carried forward for detailed study. As a result of this approach, the Tier 1 EIS will include detailed environmental studies of a wide range of alternatives, allowing public officials and the public at large to evaluate the trade-offs between varying types and degrees of benefits, impacts, and costs.

4. Selection of Preferred Alternative in Tier 1 ROD

<u>Issue</u>: How will the preferred alternative be selected in Tier 1?

<u>Proposed Approach</u>: The preferred alternative will be selected based on a comprehensive evaluation of the alternatives that are carried forward for detailed study. This evaluation will consider not only the ability of the alternatives to achieve the project's objectives, but also the environmental impacts, socio-economic impacts, costs, and other factors. The selection of a preferred alternative will be made by the Commissioner of the Indiana Department of Transportation, subject to approval by the Indiana Division Administrator of the Federal Highway Administration.

5. Single Study vs. Multiple Studies in Tier 2

<u>Issue</u>: Will Tier 2 involve a single EIS for the entire length of the Evansville to Indianapolis project, or separate studies for individual sections of independent utility within the selected corridor?

Proposed Approach: The tiered environmental process for this project will be carried out in accordance with FHWA's tiering procedures, which are reflected in 23 CFR 771.111(g) and in a memorandum from FHWA headquarters to the FHWA Missouri Division Office, dated June 18, 2001, in connection with the tiered EIS for I-70 in Missouri. As described in the June 18 memorandum, the tiered process involves the completion of a single EIS at Tier 1. If a "build" alternative is selected in the Tier 1 Record of Decision (ROD), additional environmental studies will be conducted in Tier 2 for sub-sections of the selected alternative. The environmental studies in Tier 2 may be environmental assessments (EAs), environmental impact statements (EISs), or possibly even categorical exclusions (CEs). In accordance with the June 18 memorandum, the method for conducting the Tier 2 studies will be described in the Tier 1 Draft EIS and will be approved in the Tier 1 ROD. (The June 18 tiering memorandum is available on the FHWA web site, at http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/guidebook/i70tieringmemo.htm).

Closing Remarks

Mr. Baxter and Mr. Westlake concluded by restating that USEPA's participation in this study is important, and that the Study Team will make every effort to facilitate that participation.

This meeting was held in Indiana Government Center South. Attendees included:

Frank Nierzwicki Bloomington MPO Andrew Ruff Bloomington MPO

Michaela Kendall Indiana Department of Commerce
Jeremy Wallace Indiana Department of Commerce

David Parry Indiana Department of Environmental Management
Andrew Pelloso Indiana Department of Environmental Management

Kari Brudis Indiana Department of Natural Resources
John L. Carr Indiana Department of Natural Resources
Barbara Hosler United States Fish and Wildlife Service

Wilma Marine United States Forest Service

Pat Martin West Central Indiana Economic Development District

Angela Dusenbury

Akin, Gump, Strauss, Hauer & Feld

William Malley

Akin, Gump, Strauss, Hauer & Feld

Vincent Bernardin

Bernardin, Lochmueller & Associates

Thomas Cervone

Bernardin, Lochmueller & Associates

Kia Gillette

Bernardin, Lochmueller & Associates

Michael Grovak

Bernardin, Lochmueller & Associates

David Isley

Bernardin, Lochmueller & Associates

Bernardin, Lochmueller & Associates

Jeff Buxbaum Cambridge Systematics

Tia Agnew Indiana Department of Transportation
David Butts Indiana Department of Transportation
Rickie Clark Indiana Department of Transportation
Janice Osadczuk Indiana Department of Transportation
Lyle Sadler Indiana Department of Transportation
Steve Smith Indiana Department of Transportation
Larry Heil Federal Highway Administration

INTRODUCTION - VINCE BERNARDIN

Vince Bernardin gave introductory remarks to describe the purposes of this meeting. The three main topics included:

- Discussing a Tiered NEPA EIS, and how it differs from a typical EIS
- The key findings of the Draft Purpose and Need Statement
- The next steps where do we go from here? Using the project GIS as a key resource, what kind of environmental analysis will be done in this Tier 1 study, and what will occur in a follow up Tier 2 study.

OVERVIEW OF TIERED PROCESS - BILL MALLEY

Bill Malley's presentation covered 5 major points. These are:

- The Decision to Conduct a Tiered Study
- The Legal Basis for Conducting Tiered Studies
- FHWA Experience with Tiering
- How the Tiered Process Works
- Benefits and Drawbacks of Tiered Process

A copy of the Power Point presentation which accompanied Mr. Malley's remarks are included with this meeting summary.

Point 1 - The Decision to Conduct a Tiered Study

A tiered study combines the scope of a planning study (which includes 26 counties, 14 routes, and different corridors with the level of detail required by NEPA. This study will have more detailed environmental data, more detailed engineering data, and provide for public participation far beyond what is found in a typical planning study.

The Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) began to consider the tiered concept for the I-69 study in late 1998. It was introduced to resource agencies in May 1999. The formal announcement that INDOT would conduct a tiered study was made in December 1999.

Point 2 - The Legal Basis for Conducting Tiered Studies

CEQ regulations (40CFR§1508.28) provide that tiered environmental studies may be conducted for large project to fulfill the requirements of NEPA. Tiering is applicable to a wide variety of federal actions, not just transportation projects. FHWA Regulations (23CFR§771.111(g)) discuss the application of tiering to transportation projects.

Point 3 - FHWA Experience with Tiering

FHWA's experience has been with large projects, generally involving new construction. Current ongoing projects include I-70 in Colorado (140 miles); I-70 in Missouri (199 miles), US 301 Southern Corridor in Maryland (39 miles), US 301 North Corridor in Maryland (20 miles), and I69 in Indiana (140 to 160 miles).

Point 4 - How the Tiered Process Works

Typically, the Tier 1 Analysis is a Corridor Selection Study. The corridor selection results in a Record of Decision (ROD). The Tier 2 study or studies are Alignment Selection Studies. These may either take the form of an Environmental Analysis, a FONSI, or an EIS. The Tier 2 studies also lead up to a ROD on the selected alignment. The Sections of Independent Utility for the Tier 2 studies generally are determined or at least preliminarily identified in Tier 1.

Point 5 - Benefits and Drawbacks of Tiered Process

The benefits of a tiered process include that it expedites resolution of big picture issues, expands opportunities for public and agency input, and reduces trade offs between breadth and depth of analysis. Drawbacks of the tiered process include a lack of familiarity with the process by planners and state agencies, a lack of extensive FHWA precedents for tiered studies, and a lack of clear regulatory roadmap for tiered studies.

Summary

Later in the day, more information on the tiered study will be provided. This information will include the level of detail for Tier 1 vs. Tier 2; the integration of tiered approach with regulatory requirements under other laws, documentation of tiering methodology, and other issues, question, or concerns.

PURPOSE AND NEED PRESENTATION - MICHAEL GROVAK

Michael Grovak summarized the key findings contained in the Draft Purpose and Need Statement. After presenting key findings, the next steps in the study were summarized. Key findings were divided into Transportation Needs, Regional Economic Needs, and National I-69 Needs. A copy of the Power Point presentation which accompanied Mr. Grovak's remarks are included with this meeting summary

The transportation analysis had the following findings:

- The need to provide a better connection between Indianapolis and Evansville. The analysis determined that Evansville has the least efficient connection to Indianapolis of any major city in Indiana.
- The need to improve regional accessibility throughout Southwest Indiana. The analysis determined that southwest Indiana residents have significantly poorer accessibility to jobs, population, major urban centers, airports, and Indianapolis.
- Travel congestion is not a major problem in the study area. There are some highly congested highway segments, particularly near Indianapolis. However, traffic congestion overall is less of a problem in the study area than elsewhere in Indiana.
- There are safety problems in rural areas of the study area. In particular, there is a band of counties in the middle of the study area (including Knox, Daviess, Pike, Martin, DuBois, Lawrence & Orange Counties), as well as Owen County in the northern part of the study area.

The need to improve the Indianapolis to Evansville connection, and the need to improve regional accessibility, were identified as key goals for evaluating alternatives.

The regional economic analysis had the following findings:

- The study area lags significantly behind the nation in population and employment growth rates.
- Most rural counties in the study area, according to the United States Department of Agriculture, are "stressed." 12 of the 19 rural counties in the study area (63%) are considered stressed. They have high concentrations of poverty, unemployment, and low household incomes. By contrast, in the rest of Indiana only 27 of 53 rural counties (51%) are rated as stressed.
- Economic growth in Southwest Indiana is restricted by an inadequate highway network. This is one of the major findings by Council for Urban Economic Development (CUED) in a study prepared as part of this project.

The National I-69 analysis had the following findings.

- The need for the National I-69 Project has been established. The benefits for this project significantly outweigh the costs. This is the findings of a series of studies between 1991 and 1998.
- There are specific national and international needs associated with the national I-69
 project. These include freight mobility, economic development, connecting ports and
 intermodal centers, and connecting major population centers.

The need to complete the Indianapolis to Evansville section of the National I-69 project was identified as a key goal for evaluating alternatives.

In the question and answer which followed, no questions were raised by any of the invited agencies or MPO's. The following issues were raised by Andrew Ruff of the Bloomington City Council, who attended the meeting.

- Is there in fact any demonstrable connection between four lane highways and rural development?
- Could not major highways in rural areas detract from rural development by expanding the commuter shed of major urban areas? This would lead to some areas becoming bedroom communities, and crowding out local industries.
- Have not previous studies already determined that highways are a very inefficient means to create economic development?
- How will you account for the fact that most residents of Southwest Indiana do not want the kind of development which a highway would bring?

INTRODUCTION TO PROJECT GIS - DAVID ISLEY

A copy of the Power Point presentation which accompanied Mr. Isley's remarks are included with this meeting summary.

Mr. Isley began his presentation by explaining the distinctions among the following:

- 26 county study area. This includes counties which may have a direct environmental impact from a highway.
- 2 mile wide study bands. Those route concepts which advance to the Level 3
 Screening initially will be specified as two mile wide study bands.
- 2000 foot wide variable corridors. Within each study band, a 2000 foot wide (on average) corridor will be specified. It is such a "corridor" for a preferred alternative which will be approved by an FHWA Record of Decision.
- 300 to 400 foot wide working alignments. Within each corridor, a working alignment will be specified to compare impacts of different corridors. This working alignment will be subject to modification and revision in subsequent Tier 2 studies

A summary of what will occur in the Tier 1 analysis was given. Steps include:

- Inventory resources within 2 mile wide study banks, using both existing information and gathering additional field data on a selective basis.
- Define a corridor with each study band
- Define working alignments within each corridor
- Estimate the costs and impacts of each working alignment
- Develop strategies to avoid, minimize, and mitigate impacts.

A summary of what will occur in the Tier 2 analysis was given. A range of alignment alternatives will be developed within the selected corridor. This will include preliminary engineering work, and may entail going outside of the selected corridor to avoid impacts. Mitigation measures will be specified as well.

Next, a summary was presented of how the impacts analysis for individual resources will be conducted in each Tier. In each description of Tier 2 activities, no assumptions are made that any specific consultant will assist INDOT in conducting these studies.

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Wetlands - Tier 1

- Identify the function and value of wetlands in study bands using National Wetland Inventory (NWI) wetlands maps
- Identify areas which are of high value and sensitive
- Do field studies as needed
- Estimate the wetland impacts of working alignments
- Define buffer zones around wetlands complexes

Tier 2

- We will delineate wetlands potentially impacted by alternatives
- Obtain Corps of Engineers (COE) approval of wetlands surveys

Historic and Archaeological Sites - Tier 1

- Identify known sites within study bands
- Consult with SHPO and local historians to identify unrecorded historic sites potentially affected by working alignments (Area of potential effect (APE) 2000 foot wide corridor)
- Identify reported archaeological sites and High Probability Areas
- Define buffers around significant resources

Tier 2

- Conduct full assessment of effect on individuals resources
- Resolve adverse effects
- Conduct archaeological field survey in areas potentially impacted by alternatives
- Possible archaeological testing

In Tier 1, the APE is just a measuring device for comparing alternatives. INDOT probably will have to revisit the definition of the APE in Tier 2.

Threatened and Endangered Species - Tier 1

- Identify potential habitat and resident T/E species within study bands (IDNR Data base)
- Identify possible areas for wildlife impacts
- Teams of specialists conduct field surveys as needed. To be determined in consultation with USFWS and IDNR

Tier 2

Conduct comprehensive field surveys, including sampling, trapping, and capturing

Page 8

Farmlands and Agriculture- Tier 1

- Identify farmland, including prime farmland, within study bands
- Estimate farmland (including prime farmland) acres potentially affected by working alignments
- Prepare NRCS Questionnaire

Tier 2

- Map and delineate farmland in and around alternates
- Determine total farmland (including prime farmland) acres potentially impacted by alternatives
- Prepare AD-1006 form
- Obtain Farmland Advisory Council (FAC) approval, if appropriate

Land Use - Tier 1

- Identify major land uses/land cover within study bands GAP Analysis. Includes forests, croplands, wetlands quarries, and residential
- Identify areas with comprehensive land use plans and evaluate project consistency with plans
- Estimate range of converted acres

Tier 2

- Field verify land use depicted on aerial photographs
- Determine acres converted by alternatives

Water Quality and Floodplains - Tier 1

- Identify water bodies, water quality, floodplains, and karst within study bands. Determine baseline water quality
- Estimate acres of water bodies, physiographic karst areas, and floodplains impacted by working alignments

Tier 2

- Field studies to evaluate biodiversity and water quality. Identify karst features with alternatives
- Determine acres of water bodies, karst features, and floodplains impacted by walking alternatives.

Air Quality Impacts - Tier 1

- Identify nonattainment and maintenance areas within 26 county study area Model impacts over 25 county study area
- Coordinate with MPOs to satisfy conformity requirements

Tier 2

- Analyze air quality along alternates
- Determine air quality dispersion impacts on communities adjacent to alternates

Economic Impacts - Tier 1

- Identify impacts to personal income, businesses, tourism, industry, and employment for all Indiana and neighboring states using REMI model
- Identify regional breakdown of impacts within 26 county study area

Tier 2

- Assess economic impacts on localized basis
- Consult with local and county economic officials to determine economic development plans.

Social Impacts - Tier 1

- Identify residences and communities, including minority and low income, within study bands
- Estimate range of possible relocations
- Adjust working alignment to minimize relocations

Tier 2

- Identify parcels to be impacted and landowners to re relocated by alternates
- Discuss relocation issues

Janice Osadczuk mentioned that state law prohibits taking land within 100 feet of a dedicated/filled plot of a cemetery for a transportation project.

Andy Ruff of the Bloomington City Council raised the issue about accessibility for special groups, such as the Amish in Daviess County. BLA staff stated that they have met with such groups in the past to determine their needs, and will do so again in the future. Dr. Cervone cited the importance of meeting with the leaders of such groups. In our previous experience, we learned that there are both Amish and Mennonite populations in Daviess County, and that someone who was not associated closely with one of these groups would not perceive the distinction.

Secondary and Cumulative Impacts

First, the distinction between secondary and cumulative impacts was made. Secondary (or indirect) impacts are later in time or father removed in distance but still reasonably foreseeable (40 CFR §1508.8(b)). Also, they are caused by the project. Cumulative impacts are incremental impacts of an action when added to past, present and reasonably foreseeable future actions (40 CFR § 1508.7). They are not necessarily caused by the project. Key issues in this analysis will include induced development, including "sprawl," as well as other development.

Page 10

Andy Ruff of the Bloomington City Council raised the issue of forest fragmentation in this regard, asking how it fits within the framework of secondary and cumulative impacts. Dr. Cervone mentioned that there is an edge effect you must consider. Wilma Marine of the US Forest Service characterized forest fragmentation as being a two-sided issue. There are species of birds which require open and edged forest, and there are species of birds which require habitat away from the forest edge. Depending upon the area affected, forest fragmentation could benefit or harm such species.

Tier 1

- Identify existing land use development trends in response to transportation projects
- Model this project to estimate cumulative impacts over 26 county study area
- Identify potential mitigation measures

Tier 2

- Refine assessment of other impacts based upon more current information about development trends (in consultation with local and county officials)
- Refine mitigation measures e.g., support for local land use planning

Janice Osadczuk proposed an all day meaning to discuss secondary and cumulative impacts - what is it that we want to study and analyze. The purpose would be to decide how far in the future and how far back we go in determining baseline trends and forecasting impacts for each of these resources.

Larry Heil of FHWA stated that we are required by CEQ to consider issues which have significant impacts. There is a significant judgement call to determine which resources are being significantly affected. Going to the review agencies (such as Janice suggests) can help us determine which issues are significant.

Noise Impacts - Tier 1

- Identify existing activities, land use, and level of truck and car traffic within study boundaries
- Estimate noise levels in bands radiating out from working alignment using existing traffic data

Tier 2.

- Field study to determine actual noise levels along proposed alternatives
- Determine noise levels resulting from alternatives
- Develop mitigation measures, if necessary (e.g., noise barriers)

Visual Impacts - Tier 1

- Identify type of setting crossed by working alignment
- Estimate visibility of and from working alignments to determine impacts
- Evaluate potential for context-sensitiva design elements

Tier 2

- Refine assessment of visual impacts by walking alternatives
- Identify specific elements of alignment appropriate for context-sensitive design.

There were other impact types mentioned, but the specification of the Tier 1 and Tier 2 analyses was not given. These include energy impacts, permits, hazardous materials, construction impacts, wild and scenic rivers, pedestrians and bicycles, joint development, short term uses vs. long term productivity, and irreversible and irretrievable resources.

Larry Heil mentioned that under the new draft coordination procedures, permitting is covered. Normally, detailed mitigation and permits are flushed out during design. There is a coordination point for conceptual mitigation. Janice Osadczuk suggested that we not automatically avoid brownfields or sites with limited contamination. If the ultimate preferred corridor comes through such a site, it could be remediated as part of the construction process.

INTEGRATION OF TIERED NEPA PROCESS WITH OTHER REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS - BILL MALLEY

In conducting a Tiered EIS, there are other regulatory requirements which must be satisfied. Satisfying these within a Tiered EIS will require changes in procedures from what occurs in a typical EIS. A copy of the Power Point presentation which accompanied **Mr. Malley's** remarks are included with this meeting summary. Mr. Malley began by citing three such requirements:

- Section 106 (historic properties)
- Section 7 (Threatened and Endangered Species)
- Section 404 (Wetlands)

The general approach will be to:

- Review all relevant regulations
- Identify existing regulations that support tiering and/or provide challenges
- Work with agencies to evaluate options
- Document decisions about how to proceed
- Remain flexible

Page 12

Section 106 Resources

Our approach will be to identify resources, assess the effects, and resolve effects. Existing regulations actually provide for a phased approach, which is appropriate for corridors or large land areas, or when access to properties is restricted.

The evaluation process focuses on likely presence of properties and the likely effects of proposed actions. They do not require certainty. We have a reasonable level of certainty about the proposed action.

Considering Section 106 issues in the Tier 1 analysis can be documented in several ways. These include:

- A Memorandum of Agreement (MOA)
- Programmatic agreement with the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO)
- The NEPA document itself.

Issues which we will need to address include

- How define the APE
- Field work vs. existing data
- How to conduct assessments in the absence of specific alignments
- How address mitigation
- Is a programmatic agreement needed? This is allowed, but not required.

Section 7 - Threatened and Endangered Species

Conducting the Tier 1 Analysis will include the following steps

- Species identified
- Informal consultation
- Formal consultation
 - Biological opinion (BO) prepared
 - Finding of "no jeopardy" if BO ends consultation

Issues in conducting the Tier 1 analysis include:

- Consolidation of Section 7 procedures with procedures required under NEPA and other laws
- Early consultation under Section 7 prior to filing of application for federal approvals
- Incremental steps consultation for multi-stage actions. This process requires an initial evaluation of the entire project and additional evaluation at each step.

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Issues to be resolved include:

- When to initiate Section 7 consultation
- Scope and timing of biological assessments
- Scope and timing of biological opinions if applicable
- Findings required at completion of Tier 1, if any
- Use of incremental steps

Section 404 - Wetlands

In a Section 404 process, the standard procedures include:

- FHWA is the lead agency
- The Army Corps of Engineers is the cooperating or commenting agency
- There are multiple coordination points during the process
- The Corps adopts the FHWA document
- Based on that, the Corps issues the Section 404 permit.

A proposed way of addressing Section 404 requirements includes:

- FHWA remains the lead agency
- The Corps continues as a cooperating agency
- There are multiple coordination points
- The Corps adopts Tier 1 and Tier 2 comments
- There is Corps approval of 404 permit at end of Tier 2.

Issues to be resolved with the Corps include:

- The level of Tier 1 detail
- Commitment to be made at the end of Tier 1. Timing and scope of permit applications.

Conclusion

- Tiering is recognized and established under NEPA
- No clear map exists as to how to integrate with other regulations
- Flexibility exists under these statues
- FHWA and INDOT will work with agencies to ensure regulatory compliance.

The general agreement is that INDOT and its project team need to begin meeting with regulatory agencies soon to begin determining the processes for this coordination with other requirements.

CONCLUSIONS - VINCE BERNARDIN

Vince Bernardin asked if there were any concluding remarks or observations. Feedback included:

- The issue of variable width for APE for Section 106 analysis must be addressed (John Carr)
- Some of this may be unwieldy, but we can work through it (Larry Heil)
- For some issues, there needs to be more than one or two agencies present (Janice Osadczuk)
- We need to meet to discuss the critical issues for cumulative effects analysis (Larry Heil)
- A meeting should be arranged as early as possible to discuss with each agency (if needed) the tiering procedure are we looking at the right things at the right time. What are we missing? Any other issues of concern? (Janice Osadczuk)

To:

All Attendees

From:

Michael Grovak; Bernardin, Lochmueller & Associates

Date:

March 1, 2000

Re:

Summary of MPO Scoping Meeting, I-69 Tier 1 EIS (199-0001-0PL, PL11)

On Wednesday, February 23, 2000, a scoping meeting was held for Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO's) for the I-69 Tier 1 EIS. Attendees included:

Jeremy Weir City of Bloomington, Planning Department
Rose Zigenfus Evansville Urban Transportation Study

Sweson Yang City of Indianapolis, Dept. of Metropolitan Development
Pat Martin West Central Indiana Economic Development District
Jackie Mitchell West Central Indiana Economic Development District

Joyce Newland Federal Highway Administration
Tia Agnew Indiana Department of Transportation
Robert Buskirk Indiana Department of Transportation
Eric Destival Indiana Department of Transportation
Janice Osadczuk Indiana Department of Transportation
Lyle Sadler Indiana Department of Transportation

Vincent Bernardin Bernardin, Lochmueller & Associates Michael Grovak Bernardin, Lochmueller & Associates

Jim Dittoe Winning Communities

A Power Point presentation (copy attached) was given by Vincent Bernardin. Following is a summary of the main points of the presentation and discussion, referenced to the slide to which they pertain.

Slide 3. (V. Bernardin). We begin the recent history of this project in 1990. However, plans for some kind of Southwest Indiana Highway date back 50 years, to the very beginnings of the Interstate system.

Slide 4. (V. Bernardin). Previous environmental studies considered the Evansville to Bloomington portion of Evansville to Indianapolis highway. This was a logical step since 1) it was not decided that such a highway would be an Interstate facility and 2) a four lane highway (SR 37) already existed between Bloomington and Indianapolis. Providing a four lane link between Bloomington and Evansville would fill in the gap, providing a four lane connection between Evansville and Indianapolis.

- Slide 4. (V. Bernardin). This present study is an entirely new Evansville to Indianapolis EIS. There has been no previous NEPA study with this scope. By any definition, this is a different project. The scope of the previous Evansville to Bloomington EIS limited the alternatives which could be studied. We now can study many alternatives which were not in a Evansville to Bloomington scope.
- Slide 5. (B. Buskirk). We need to remember that Corridor 18 could not be a consideration in previous studies. This was according to the direction of FHWA.
- Slide 6. (V. Bernardin). INDOT has decided to use a "Tiered" approach in this EIS. The Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations allow for very large projects to have two tiers. The first tier addresses broad planning issues. The second step looks at all details, including detailed impacts and mitigation. The tiered approach avoids having large projects held up, for example, by a detailed mitigation measure. Various questions were then asked about benefit-cost analysis. They were:
- Q. What about benefit-cost analysis? Will you demonstrate cost feasibility in Tier 1?
- A. The role of benefit-cost analysis in the Tier 1 EIS is yet to be determined.
- Q. Who does the Record of Decision (ROD) for the Tier 1 EIS?
- A. As is typically the case, the ROD is issued by the Secretary of Transportation.
- Q. Who will be the "consulted parties" for this EIS?
- A. The definition of "consulted parties" for this EIS is fairly broad. This will be one of the most open process you will ever participate in.
- Q. Will segments of independent utility be determined in Tier 1?
- A. They will be part of the record of decision. There are three legal tests for segments of independent utility, and we are bound by them
- Slide 9. (V. Bernardin). There will be an intensive amount of public communication. First, there will be four rounds of public meetings. For each round, they will be held at three locations distributed throughout the area. We also will have a project web site, and a 24 hour telephone hot line.
- (J. Dittoe) His firm (Winning Communities) will be working with stakeholder groups to get people to discuss contentious issues. We will work with people in small groups. We also are using a communications firm. We are not promoting any alternative. Rather, we want to communicate with the public in a professional way, and help everyone understand that this is a fair, impartial study.

- Slide 9. (V. Bernardin). Another important step will be documentation of the project's Purpose and Need. It will grow out of a statement which Cris Klika is writing. The highway has at least three purposes. They are to strengthen the transportation network in southwestern Indiana, to remove the barriers to economic development in southwest Indian, and to complete the Indiana portion of Corridor 18. Consideration of Corridor 18 was not a part of previous studies.
- Slide 13. (V. Bernardin). Now that Commissioner Klika has articulated certain policy goals, we need to determine how to translate these goals into measures of effectiveness.
- **Slide 14.** (V. Bernardin). We will look at localized business impacts. These include both local and broad, corridor-level impacts. We will use and adapt standard INDOT methodologies. We will expand the network of standard INDOT methodologies over to I-57 in Illinois. We also will extend the model's network into northern Kentucky.
- Q. Will the model include the Indianapolis region?
- A. It will include entire state.
- Q. How will the MPO's models be used?
- A. They will have a role in air quality analysis.
- (V. Bernardin). We also will assess cumulative impacts. The completion of the entirety of Corridor 18 is one obvious reasonably foreseeable impact. It will be considered in the Level 3 impacts screening.
- Q. Will you use STEAM to analyze user benefits?
- A. STEAM will not be used. We will build on and modify a component of MCIBAS (NET_BC) for the study.
- Slide 15. (V. Bernardin). Environmental impacts will be the primary focus in Level 3. We will have a massive GIS constructed for this part of the state. (J. Osadczuk) A research study has been proposed for Purdue University to replicate this effort for the rest of Indiana.
- Q. (J. Newland). Are watershed included in the GIS?
- A. We don't think so. If not, we will add them. (It later was determined that a watershed layer already is included as one of the GIS layers.
- Q. Will the TransCAD socio-economic data be brought into GIS?
- A. There are no plans to.

- Q. Will land use be a part of the GIS?
- A. One of the layers is USGS land use/land cover information. We can use this information in, for example, gap analysis.
- (V. Bernardin). By this point (Level 3), we hope to be down to about 4 corridors. Within these approximately 2000' corridors we will develop a working alignment. The purpose of these working alignments is to estimate and compare impacts.
- (V. Bernardin). The corridors will be geographically diverse. The Commissioner wants to see distinctly different corridors carried through the environmental process. There will be more than screening of alternatives. There also will be a winnowing and refining process.
- (M. Grovak). One reason to have geographically diverse alternatives is to ensure that there is no major environmental difficulty which would affect multiple alternatives. It will not be until level 3 that such difficulties may be identified.
- (V. Bernardin). There is provision for a significant number of field inspections. The need for these inspections will be defined for us be the resource agencies, based upon what they identify for us.
- Slide 16. (V. Bernardin). This is a schedule of coordination points at which we will come back to MPO's and resource agencies for further input and feedback. They occur toward the end of the Level 1, 2, and 3 analyses.

Question and Answer

- Q. How extensive will the Level 1 screening be?
- A. We don't envision many alternatives being taken off the table. Level 1 will be more a process of determining what needs to be ON the table.
- Q. Is this project a national case test for Corridor 18?
- A. It is better described as a test case for a tiered analysis. We will follow up and determine the status of environmental studies on other portions of Corridor 18.
- Q. How does this study relate to the "Corridors to Borders" program?
- A. John Schwartz of Voices for 1-69 felt we should tie in the EIS with this initiative. INDOT has taken no action in that regard.
- Q. Be aware that FHWA is making a new study into the question of road kill, and its relationship to protecting migratory pathways.

- Q. When might MPO's include study results as part of their long range plans?
- A. It is premature to discuss this specific issue.

Suggestions

- Include a new access road to the Indianapolis Airport from whatever alternative is selected.
- Make provisions to include fiber optic transmission within this corridor.

To: All Attendees, Project Staff, Resource Agencies

From: Michael Grovak; Bernardin, Lochmueller & Associates, Inc.

Date: February 3, 2000

Re: Agency Scoping Meeting, I69 Tier 1 EIS (199-0001-0PL, PL11)

On this date, the agency scoping meeting for the I69 Tier 1 EIS was held at the INDOT Greenfield District offices. Attendees included:

Vincent Bernardin

Thomas Cervone

Bernardin, Lochmueller & Associates (Consultant Team)

Bernardin, Lochmueller & Associates (Consultant Team)

Bernardin, Lochmueller & Associates (Consultant Team)

David Isley

Bernardin, Lochmueller & Associates (Consultant Team)

Bernardin, Lochmueller & Associates (Consultant Team)

Steve Decker Cambridge Systematics (Consultant Team)
William Malley Cutler & Stanfield (Legal Counsel to INDOT)
Sara Dyer Dyer Environmental Services (Consultant Team)

Tony DeSimone Federal Highway Administration, Indiana Larry Heil Federal Highway Administration, Indiana

David Kissel Hoosier National Forest

Scott Deloney Indiana Department of Environmental Management (Air Quality)
Andrew Pelloso Indiana Department of Environmental Management (Water Quality)

Robert Buskirk Indiana Department of Transportation
Larry Goode Indiana Department of Transportation
Jim Juricic Indiana Department of Transportation
Mark Niehoff Indiana Department of Transportation

Ed Hartke Indiana Geological Survey (Consultant Team)

Gerry Newell United States Army Corps of Engineers
Doug Shelton United States Army Corps of Engineers

Virginia Laszewski United States Environmental Protection Agency, Region 5
Mike MacMullen United States Environmental Protection Agency, Region 5

Barbara Hosler United States Fish and Wildlife Service
Jim Dittoe Winning Communities (Consultant Team)

The meeting was convened at 10:00 am. Vincent Bernardin provided an overview of the project, using a Powerpoint presentation. A copy of the presentation is attached. The agency scoping meeting is the beginning of a long process of resource agency involvement in every aspect of the study. At this first meeting, INDOT and its consultants solicited input on the following major points:

- 1. Study approach and scope (copies of the scope of work were distributed to all attendees)
- 2. Alternatives to be studied
- 3. Particular questions or concerns about the tiered environmental process more details are given below.

Following are major points which were raised in the formal presentation. They are referenced to the page and slide position on the attached handout.

Page 2, Slide 1 (Project History). The project has a long history. Even so, this study is a new effort. While previous work and analysis will have some value to this study, it is in every respect a new study, started from "scratch".

Page 2, Slide 3 (Tiered EIS). A tiered EIS represents a expansion of the NEPA process. Previous studies dealing with this breadth of alternatives and geographic scope tended to be planning studies without an environmental component. Use of a tiered EIS allows environmental considerations to be part of what to this point have been strictly planning studies. This Tier 1 study will address the big picture issues of mode and corridor and (possibly) segments of independent utility. Tier 2 EIS's will determine exact alignment and mitigation/impact issues.

Page 3, Slide 3 (Outline of the Study). Preparation of the Purpose and Need is a major, important foundation to the entire study. It will be developed with the maximum participation of resource agencies, stakeholders, and the general public.

Page 4, Slide 1 (Outline of the Study). Every possible means will be used to fully involve all stakeholders. These include large public meetings, small group meetings, a project newsletter, a project web site, and a project toll-free information number.

Page 4, Slide 2 (Outline of the Study). These three general purposes (strengthen transportation system, stimulate economic growth, and complete Indiana's part of Corridor 18) were established by the Indiana Department of Transportation when the scope of work was negotiated.

Page 4, Slide 3 (Three Levels of Analysis). These three levels of analysis are not as discrete as the slide implies. They represent a continuum of the general flow of effort during the study.

Page 5, Slide 1 (Outline of the Study - Level 1). At the first stage, only alternatives which are unreasonable or infeasible will be eliminated.

Page 5, Slide 3 (Outline of the Study - Level 3). This analysis will depend heavily on the GIS being created for the project. Field inspections will tend to be *ad hoc*, to address specific issues and concerns. As Mike MacMullen from USEPA termed it, this level of analysis is a "90% solution" for possible environmental issues.

Page 6, Slide 1 (Coordination Milestones). Before each of the major decision points, a round of meetings will be held with both the resource agencies and the public.

Agency Scoping Meeting - I69 February 3, 2000 Page 3

Following are questions and comments which followed the formal presentation. They are grouped by comments relating to the study's scope and approach, and comments regarding the range of alternatives.

COMMENTS REGARDING THE STUDY'S SCOPE AND APPROACH

David Isley, BLA. He described the massive GIS which is being built for this study. A handout was distributed (copy attached) which describes the approximately 100 layers which will be included in it. Using this GIS tool we will devise working alignments in each study corridor which minimize environmental impacts.

Mike MacMullen, USEPA. INDOT has decided to do the right thing by taking a step back to do this study. Special considerations for the impacts analysis must include wetlands, 4F, and sustainable communities. The Department of Agriculture should be invited to participate, since this study will need to focus on agricultural operations. Also, will the GIS include a natural features inventory? He also mentioned that any wetlands including fens or bogs must be excluded in their entirety from any potential alignment.

Larry Heil, FHWA. He described several other studies in nearby areas. He did so in order that participants would not confuse these with this study. One is the recently-issued Record of Decision to upgrade US 231 to a four lane facility between the Ohio River and I64. The other is an environmental study of the I69 alignment between I64 and the Pennyrile Parkway in Kentucky. A Notice of Intent to conduct this study will be issued shortly.

Scott Deloney, IDEM (Air Quality). By this summer, a number of counties in the Indianapolis and Evansville areas probably will be declared non-attainment areas. These will include Posey, Vanderburgh, Warrick, Marion, Johnson, and Morgan, and perhaps Hendricks and Gibson as well. He is concerned about alternatives which would cause increases in VMT (and hence NO_x) in these affected counties. Coordination with local MPO's for air quality modeling will be important.

Mike MacMullen, USEPA. Since one of the purposes of this study is to increase economic development, the secondary impacts related to development (changes in land use) are an important part of the impacts analysis. Vince Bernardin pointed out Section 6.4.3 of the Work Program (Secondary Impacts) and asked that Mike provide feedback on our approach. Vince recognized that Task 6.4.3 does not document in detail how this issue will be addressed, but instead gives an approach to build on.

Brad Steckler, INDOT. The project's GIS, when completed, will be an invaluable resource. Will it be publicly available? Vince Bernardin said that it certainly would be, and that the custodian probably would be the Indiana Geological Survey. However, that is yet to be determined.

COMMENTS REGARDING THE RANGE OF ALTERNATIVES

Mike MacMullen, USEPA, and others. Improved and expanded freight rail service is important. The two Class 1 railroads which parallel US 41 currently are operating near full capacity. We may need to consider increasing freight rail capacity by multiple tracking some of these routes. Also, he suggested that an alignment which goes from US 41 near Sullivan via SR 54 to US 231/SR 57 near Bloomfield be considered.

Dave Kissel, Hoosier National Forest. An alignment using US 50 through the Hoosier National forest does not necessarily need to be removed off the table. The lands which would be taken may not fall under 4F protection.

Jim Juricic, INDOT. US 231 should be shown as a possible alignment between SR 57 and SR 67.

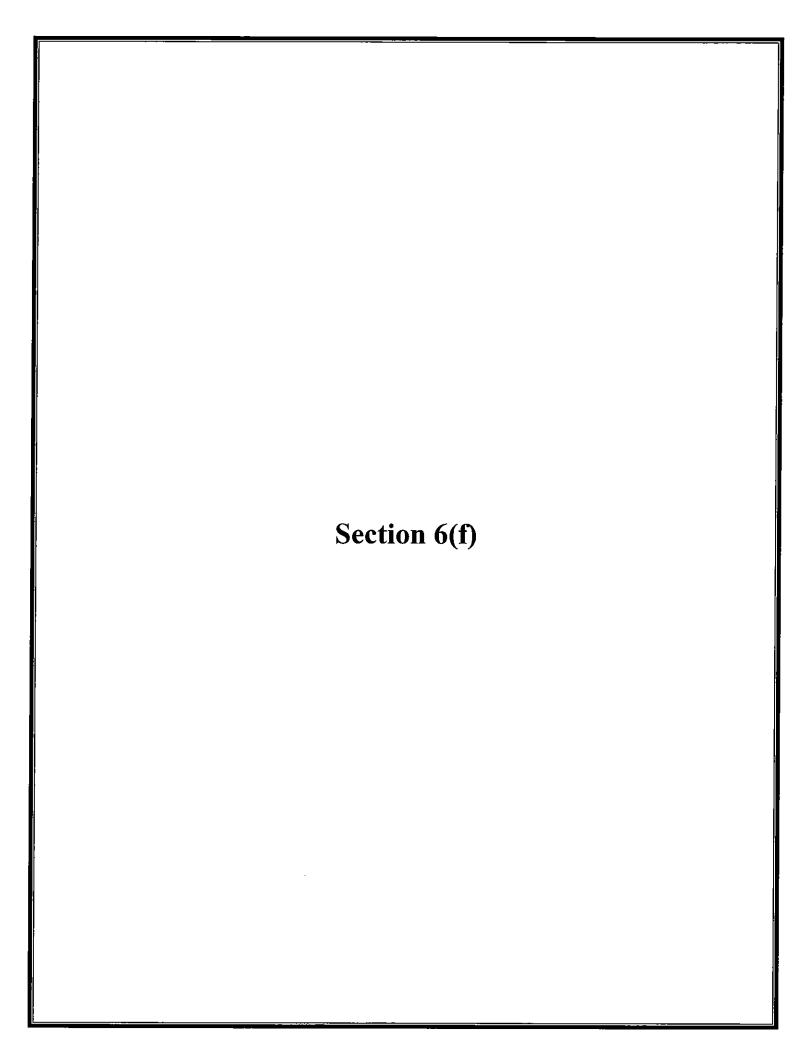
Brad Steckler, INDOT. He has heard input from groups around Shelbyville that we should consider a bypass around the south and east side of Indianapolis. This would provide a continuous I-69 connection around the south and east side of Indianapolis.

Larry Heil, FHWA. There is a lot of desire for better connections from Bloomington eastward to I-65 in the SR 46 corridor. This could be considered a possible alignment.

Sara Dyer, Dyer Environmental. She shared alignments which were part of various studies in the 1960's and early 80's. A 1960's toll study called for a new alignment from US 231 near Farmers to travel north, going to the west of Cagles Mill Lake to connect with I-70. The RQAW study from 1980 called for a route similar to the 1996 DEIS's preferred alignment up to Bloomington, and from there going straight north on a new alignment to I-70.

Sara also suggested better labeling of alignments and state/US routes. In particular, we should show more new alignment alternatives.

Also attached to this summary is a handout regarding the GIS, describing the counties which it will include and the GIS layer. Also included is a map showing possible alignments which were presented at the meeting, as well as the sign-in sheets.



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United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

MIDWEST REGION 1709 JACKSON STREET OMAHA, NEBRASKA 68102-2571

L7691(MWR-CRSP/G)

Nuc 2 7 2003

Mr. Robert E. Dirks, P.E. Environmental Engineer U.S. Department of Transportation 575 North Pennsylvania Street, Room 254 Indianapolis, Indiana 46204

Dear Mr. Dirks:

This is in regard to your July 29 letter to William Schenk, Regional Director, who has recently retired. These comments are provided on behalf of Regional Director Ernest Quintana who has asked me to respond on his behalf to the "Preferred Alternative and Mitigation Package for the I-69, Evansville to Indianapolis Study." The document contains information regarding the selection of Alternative 3C as the project's preferred alternative. It is our understanding that this document is part of the scoping for Tier 1 of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (ER 02/691).

Based on our review of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) and the Preferred Alternative and Mitigation Package, it appears that no projects funded with the Land and Water Conservation Fund (L&WCF) will be affected. Section 6(f)(3) of the Land and Water Conservation Fund states that no property acquired or developed with assistance under this section shall, without the approval of the Secretary, be converted to other than public outdoor recreation uses. This statement was evidenced in Chapter 8.5, on Page 8-28, of the Section 4(f) evaluation in the DEIS.

Please continue to consult with the official who administers the L&WCF program in Indiana to determine if the preferred alternative will have any impacts to L&WCF sites. That official is Mr. John R. Goss, Director, Department of Natural Resources, 402 West Washington Street, W256, Indianapolis, Indiana 46204.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. Please contact me at 402-221-3292 if I can be of further assistance.

Sincerely,

Marilyn K. Gillen

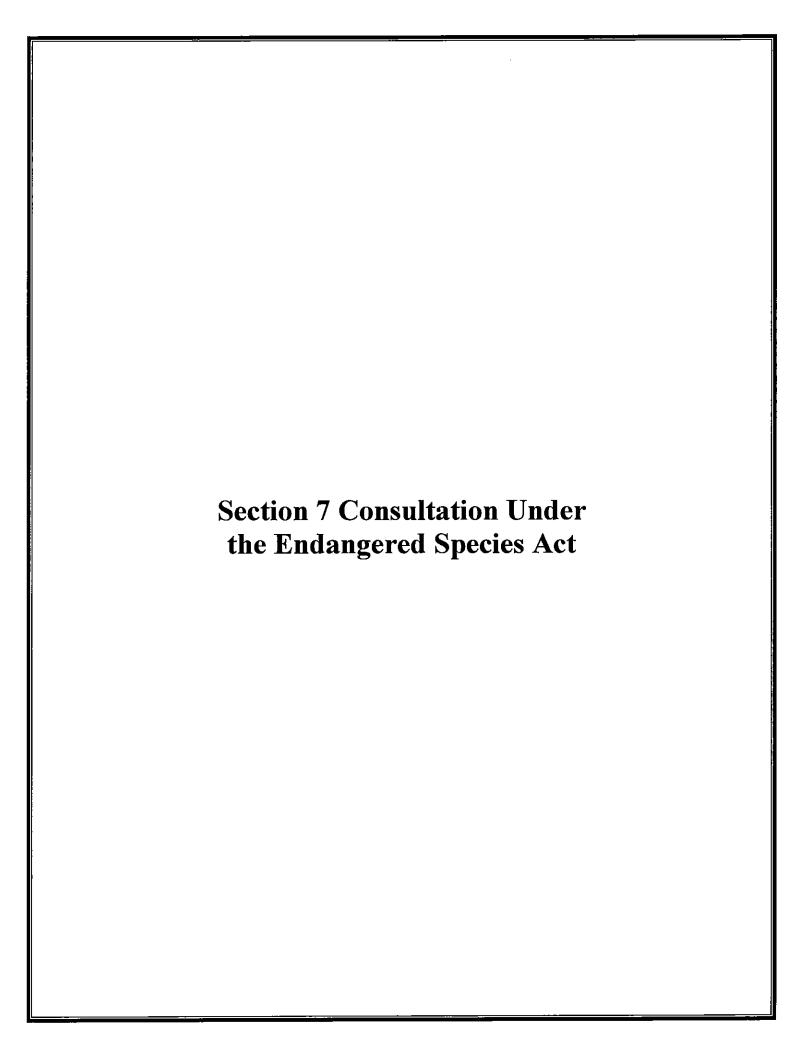
Outdoor Recreation Planner

Marelya K. Gillen

Partnerships/Grants

CC:

Mr. Bob Bronson, Chief, State and Community Outdoor Recreation Planning Section, Division of Outdoor Recreation, Department of Natural Resources, 402 West Washington Street, W271, Indianapolis, Indiana 46204



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United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

BLOOMINGTON FIELD OFFICE (ES) 620 South Walker Street
Bloomington, IN 47403-2121
(812) 334-4261 FAX (812) 334-4273

22 August 2003

John R. Baxter
Indiana Division
U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration
575 North Pennsylvania Street, Room 254
Indianapolis, IN 46204

- neéeWed

032733

AUG 2 6 2003

BLA

RE:

Initiation of Formal Section 7 Consultation under the Endangered Species Act for the proposed Interstate 69 from Evansville to Indianapolis, Indiana

Dear Mr. Baxter:

This letter acknowledges the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (Service) 21 July 2003 receipt of your 18 July 2003 letter requesting initiation of formal section 7 consultation under the Endangered Species Act of 1973. The consultation concerns the possible effects of the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) and the Indiana Department of Transportation's (INDOT) proposed construction, operation, and maintenance of Alternative 3C of Interstate 69 (I-69) from Indianapolis to Evansville, Indiana on the Indiana bat (*Myotis sodalis*) and the bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*). Alternative 3C traverses portions of Gibson, Warrick, Pike, Daviess, Greene, Monroe, Morgan, Johnson, and Marion counties in Indiana.

All information required of you to initiate formal consultation was either included with your letter, the accompanying Tier 1 Biological Assessment (BA), or is otherwise accessible for our consideration and reference. Section 7 allows the Service up to 90 calendar days to conclude formal consultation with your agency and an additional 45 calendar days to prepare our biological opinion (unless we mutually agree to an extension). Therefore, we expect to provide you with our final biological opinion no later than 3 December 2003 (135 calendar days after receipt of initiation request). If requested, we will provide you an opportunity to comment on a draft of the biological opinion before it is finalized.

As a reminder, the Endangered Species Act requires that after initiation of formal consultation, the Federal action agency may not make any irreversible or irretrievable commitment of resources that limits future options. This practice insures agency actions do not preclude the formulation or implementation of reasonable and prudent alternatives that avoid jeopardizing the continued existence of endangered or threatened species or destroying or modifying their critical habitats.

Because you are completing environmental studies for the proposed I-69 Indianapolis to Evansville project in incremental steps using a tiered approach, the Service plans to issue a biological opinion on each incremental step or tier being considered. This initial formal consultation will result in a Tier 1

Biological Opinion that considers the broad impacts of the entire action (50 CFR §402.14(k)). Upon the issuance of this biological opinion, the FHWA must prepare a BA for each subsequent incremental step (i.e., segments of independent utility) in Tier 2 to determine the level of consultation required.

Your letter also requested the Service's concurrence with your determination that the proposed construction, operation, and maintenance of Alternative 3C of I-69 is not likely to adversely affect the Federally endangered fanshell mussel (*Cyprogenia stegaria*). Based upon the information presented within the Tier 1 BA, we concur that the construction, operation, and maintenance of Alternative 3C of I-69 is not likely to adversely affect fanshell mussels. Therefore, this precludes the need for further consultation regarding the fanshell mussel and this project as required under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act. However, if new information on fanshells within the I-69 action area becomes available (e.g., during Tier 2 field studies) or if project plans are changed significantly (e.g., new proposed crossings of the East Fork of the White River), please contact our office for further consultation.

If you have any questions or concerns about this consultation or the consultation process in general, please feel free to contact me or Andy King at 812-334-4261.

Sincerely yours,

Scott E. Pruitt Field Supervisor

cc: Robert E. Dirks, FHWA
Thomas H. Cervone, Bernardin-Lochmueller & Associates, Inc.



United States Department of the Interior



FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

BLOOMINGTON FIELD OFFICE (ES) 620 South Walker Street Bloomington, IN 47403-2121 (812) 334-4261 FAX (812) 334-4273

March 13, 2003

Mr. John R. Baxter U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration, Indiana Division 575 North Pennsylvania Street, Room 254 Indianapolis, Indiana 46204

Dear Mr. Baxter:

This responds to your letter dated February 21, 2003, requesting a list of species that are Federally listed, proposed for Federal listing, or candidate species that may be present within the study area of the Indiana Department of Transportation's preferred alternative, Alternative 3C, of the proposed Interstate 69 (I-69) from Evansville to Indianapolis, Indiana project. This letter also identifies Critical Habitat that has been designated under the Endangered Species Act within the counties traversed by Alternative 3C.

It is our understanding that the Federal Highway Administration, in cooperation with the Indiana Department of Transportation, is currently preparing a conceptual Biological Assessment (BA) for Tier 1 of the I-69 project that will only assess anticipated impacts to listed species and Critical Habitat for Alternative 3C. The Tier 1 BA will utilize pre-existing data and will contain commitments for conducting detailed field studies during Tier 2 of the project. Alternative 3C traverses portions of Gibson, Warrick, Pike, Daviess, Greene, Monroe, Morgan, Johnson and Marion counties in Indiana.

Our data indicate the following species may occur in the areas traversed by Alternative 3C.

- (1) Listed species:
 - Indiana bat (Myotis sodalis), Endangered Statewide occurrence
 - Bald eagle (Haliaeetus leucocephalus), Threatened Statewide occurrence
 - Fanshell mussel (Cyprogenia stegaria), Endangered Daviess and Pike counties
- (2) Proposed species: none
- (3) Candidate species: none
- (4) Designated Critical Habitat:
 - for the Indiana bat (Myotis sodalis) Ray's Cave, Greene Co., Indiana

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These comments have been prepared under the authority of the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act (16 U.S.C. 661 et. seq.) and are consistent with the intent of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, the Endangered Species Act of 1973, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Mitigation Policy. This letter provides endangered species technical information only, and does not fulfill the requirements of Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act. If project plans change or portions of the proposed project were not evaluated, it is our recommendation that the changes be submitted for our review. The current accuracy of this species list needs to be verified if it is more than 90 days old and preparation of a biological assessment has yet to begin [50 CFR §402.12(e)].

For future coordination please contact Andy King, who is the Services' official contact for this I-69 project, at (812) 334-4261 ext. 216.

Sincerely yours,

Scott E. Pruitt Field Supervisor

cc:Tom Cervone, Bernardin, Lochmueller & Associates, Inc., Evansville, IN Katie Gremillion-Smith, Indiana Division of Fish and Wildlife, Indianapolis, IN



Indiana Department of Natural Resources

199-0001-09D

Indiana Division of Fish & Wildlife 562 DNR Road Mitchell, IN 47446 26 February 2003

Tom Cervone Bernardin-Lochmueller & Associates 6200 Vogel Road Evansville, IN 47715-4006

Dear Tom,

I have looked over the map of the preferred route from the I-69 extension Draft EIS that you sent me. I have provided you with copies of DeLorme maps that contain the proposed route and have eagle nests marked on them (in red). The nests are numbered and their history is provided on another table (cross-referenced by number). It appears that the Snakey Point nest near Oakland City is in closest proximity to the route and I have provided you with part of a topo map that shows the location in more detail. I marked in red the nest location for 2002, just southwest of the nest used in 2001. I have also included a topo with an unconfirmed nest just west of Washington. I will check this out in the next couple of weeks to see if it is indeed an eagle's nest.

Lastly I have provided you with a map of loggerhead shrike locations in the Washington (Daviess Co.) area. This is the core of their range in Indiana and I would hate to see it disrupted.

If you need additional information, let me know.

Best regards,

John Castrale

Nongame Bird Biologist

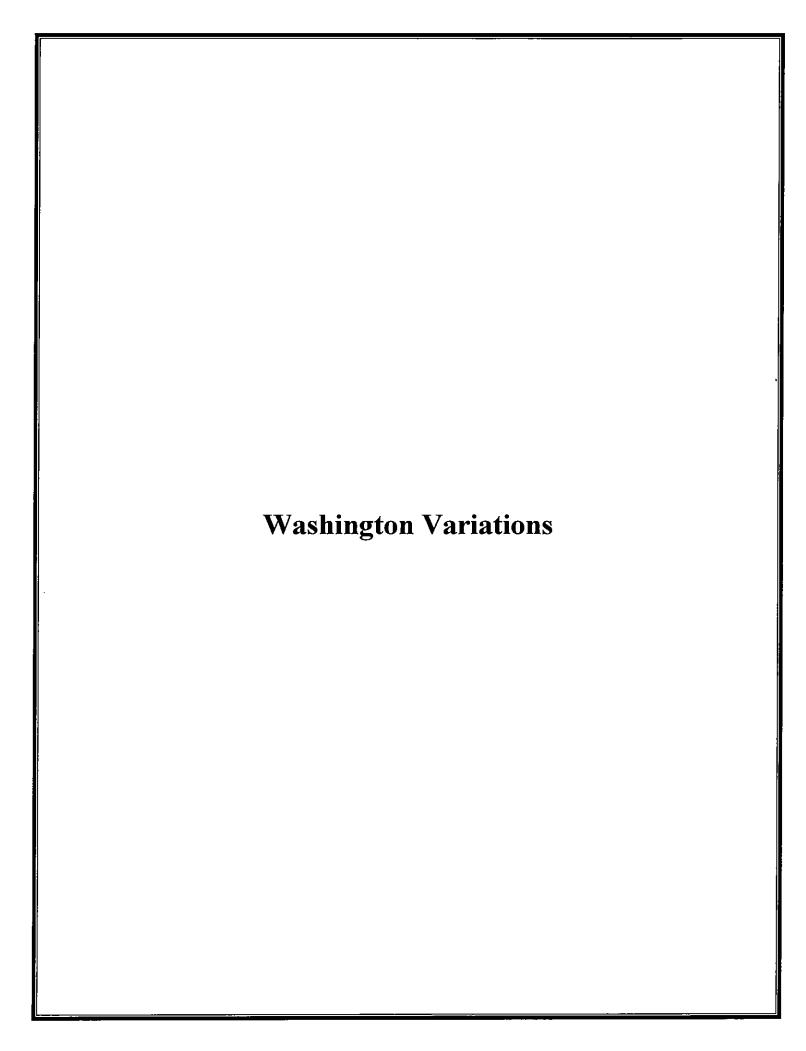
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199-0001-0PL Frank O'Bannon, Governor John Goss, Director

Indiana Department of Natural Resources

Environmental Unit Division of Water 402 W. Washington Street, Rm. W264 Indianapolis, IN 46204-2641

13 August 2003

Tom Cervone, PhD, Environmental Manager Bernardin-Lochmueller & Associates, Inc 6200 Vogel Road Evansville, IN 47715-4006

Re: DNR #9642-2 ~ I-69 Indianapolis to Evansville Tier I EIS; Multi-County (Marion through Vanderburgh)

Dear Mr. Cervone:

The Indiana Department of Natural Resources has reviewed the above referenced project per your request. Our agency offers the following comments for your information and in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969.

There are two Division of Nature Preserves (DNP) owned properties located in the vicinity of the Washington Variations: Capehart Sand Flats and Thousand Acre Woods. Alternative WE2 will have the least impact with respect to these properties.

There are four proposed variations within Alternative 3C for the possible I-69 bypass roads around Washington. Variation WW1 generally follows the path of the White River heading southwest from Plainville then turning south and passing Washington. WW2 heads south from Plainville and turns southwest to follow the southeast edge of the Thousand Acre Woods complex, then crosses through the southern 1/3 of the Plainville Sand Dunes Region before joining - WW1 on the west side of Washington. WE1 and WE2 continue south from where WW2 turns southwest, then make a series of southwest and south turns around the east edge of Washington before joining the I-69 corridor south of Washington. WE1 uses part of the existing US50 bypass around Washington.

The two western options (WWI and WW2) will cause much greater impacts to fish, wildlife and botanical resources than either of the two eastern options (WE1 and WE2). The WW1 and WW2 variations will impact respectively 64 and 63 acres of forest, 46 and 34 acres of National Wetland Inventory (NWI) wetlands, and 42 and 46 acres of floodplain. The WW1 study corridor affects about 200 feet of a Smother's Creek oxbow (NWI wetland). It runs through about 0.75 miles of other NWI wetlands associated with Smother's Creek, then crosses Smother's Creek further north affecting yet more NWI wetlands. It closely follows the White River floodplain. The WW2 study corridor clips the southeast edge of Thousand Acre Woods. It is within the Prairie Creek floodplain and within 0.2 miles of a high biodiversity area (Capeheart Sand Flats).

Variations WE1 and WE2 will impact respectively 22 and 20 acres of forest, two (2) and three (3) acres of NWI wetlands, and each will impact one (1) acre of floodplain. Variation WE2 goes through significantly more NWI wetland associated with the floodplain of Veale Creek than does WE1. It also impacts Hurricane Branch, a tributary of Veale Creek. Variation WE2 cuts through a more than 100 foot wide forested riparian zone of Hurricane Branch and tributary.

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Letter to Mr. Cervone August 13, 2003 Page 2

Alternative WE1 will cause the least impacts to natural resources described in the impacts summary statement as forest, woodland, and floodplain habitat. Compared to WW1, WE1 causes a threefold lesser impact to forested habitat; a 23-fold lesser impact to wet habitat and wetlands and a 41-fold lesser impact to riparian and floodplain habitat. This alternative also avoids the White River floodplain, the Plainville Sand Dunes Region (which contains the ecologically sensitive Capehart Sand Flats), and Thousand Acre Woods. While it uses the same alignment as much of WE2, it follows an alternative alignment to WE2 near Washington, which reduces the impacts to the drainage and riparian zones of Veale Creek, Hurricane Beach, and their tributaries. Avoiding impacts to the aforementioned DNP properties near Washington should be further considered.

Our agency appreciates this opportunity to be of service and apologizes for not being able to respond sooner in this matter. Please do not hesitate to contact Christie Kiefer, Environmental Coordinator at (317) 232-4160 or toll free at 1-877-928-3755 if we can be of further assistance.

Sincerely

Michael W. Neyer, Pl

Director

Division of Water

Note: Please include the above DNR # on any future correspondence regarding this project.



Indiana Department of Natural Resources

Division of Historic Preservation & Archaeology • 402 W. Washington Street, W274 • Indianapolis, IN 46204-2739 Phone 317-232-1646 • Fax 317-232-0693 • dhpa@dnr.state.in.us

March 25, 2003

Frank O'Bannon, Governor John Goss, Director





030086

Thomas Cervone, Ph.D. Bernardin, Lochmueller & Associates, Inc. 6200 Vogel Road Evansville, Indiana 47715

Federal agency: Federal Highway Administration

Re: I-69 Indianapolis to Evansville Tier I EIS—Washington Variations

Dear Dr. Cervone:

We have reviewed John R. Baxter's February 28, 2003, letter and attachments regarding the aforementioned project pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended.

Given the level of detail we were provided about the properties that might be impacted, we are unable to offer an opinion as to whether any of the four Washington, Daviess County, variations on the Preferred Alternative (3C) is clearly superior to or inferior to the others in regard to impacts on historic or potentially historic properties. To do so, we would need more specific information about which properties would be impacted and in what way or ways. Given the early stage of the design process, we are not certain that those questions could be answered with great specificity at this point, in any event.

We would like to take the opportunity to share certain issues that the materials provided with the February 28 submission have raised in our minds. For one, it appears that State Register properties (i.e., those listed on the Indiana Register of Historic Sites and Structures) have been counted as "Potentially Eligible" (i.e., for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places). We think that is an appropriate way to classify properties listed in the State Register at this juncture, given that the identification of historic properties is being handled in a tiered fashion in the NEPA process, as well as in the ongoing review process under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended. We just wanted to be certain that we are interpreting your data correctly. Please advise us if our interpretation is erroneous.

Which variation is considered to extend from where WW1 and WW2 split near the northeast corner of the map down to near the east-central part of the map where WW2 veers to the southwest as it splits from the shared WE1/WE2 alignment? That is, should the section in question be considered WW2 only, WE1/WE2 only, or WW2/WE1/WE2?

From other information that your firm, the Federal Highway Administration, or the Indiana Department of Transportation has provided to date, it appears to us that the potential Amish Historic District falls within the 2000-foot corridors of both variation WE1 and variation WE2. However, we are wondering why the potential Amish Historic District is not also within the working alignment of WE1, given that the district apparently is within the working alignment of WE2, and given that WE1 and WE2 share a working alignment at the point at which they would pass through or closest to the potential district, which lies to the northeast of the City of Washington.

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MAR 28 2003

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Thomas Cervone, Ph.D. March 25, 2003 Page 2 of 2

Thank you for your attention.

Very truly yours,

on C. Smith

Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

JCS:JLC:jlc

cc: John R. Baxter, P.E., Federal Highway Administration

Janice Osadczuk, Indiana Department of Transportation

emc: Robert Dirks, Federal Highway Administration

Lyle Sadler, Indiana Department of Transportation James E. Juricic, Indiana Department of Transportation

Linda Weintraut, Ph.D., Weintraut & Associates Historians, Inc.



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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BLOOMINGTON FIELD OFFICE (ES) 620 South Walker Street Bloomington, IN 47403-2121 (812) 334-4261 FAX (812) 334-4273

March 14, 2003

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Mr. John R. Baxter U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration, Indiana Division 575 North Pennsylvania Street, Room 254 Indianapolis, Indiana 46204

Dear Mr. Baxter:

This responds to your letter and attachments dated February 28, 2003, requesting comments regarding the four Washington variations currently under consideration as part of INDOT's recommended/preferred Alternative 3C of the proposed Interstate 69 (I-69) from Evansville to Indianapolis, Indiana project.

We appreciate the opportunity to comment on the Washington variations of Alternative 3C. However, please refer to the Department of Interior's November 14, 2002 comment letter on the Tier 1 DEIS, which continues to represent our agency's positions on the five build alternatives under consideration as well as the no-build alternative. Because you only provided us with a brief summary of anticipated impacts for the four Washington variations and set a short time line for us to provide comments, we had to base our comments on the information that you provided with your letter and from a brief review of maps contained within the Tier 1 DEIS. Our comments are limited to impacts to fish and wildlife resources and the habitats that support them.

Based on the maps and the limited environmental information contained in Table 1. Summary of Selected Impacts for the 4 Washington Variations attached to your letter, it appears that the two eastern variations (WE 1 and WE 2) would have far fewer impacts to forest and wetlands than either of the western variations (WW 1 and WW 2). Although WW 2 would impact fewer wetlands than WW 1, it would traverse the Plainville Sand Dune Region, which is home to a regionally unique flora and fauna and therefore is not preferable from a fish and wildlife perspective. Based on our review of the Washington variations as depicted in maps within the Environmental Atlas of the DEIS, it appears that WE 1 would utilize an existing highway (U.S. 50) for a portion of its length and traverses or approaches relatively fewer areas of natural habitat than WE 2. Based only on the relative size of impacts, the eastern variations would be less likely to have adverse affects to Federally endangered Indiana bats and Federally threatened bald eagles because they would impact fewer forested acres (potential roosting/nesting/foraging habitat) and wetlands than the western variations. Therefore, we encourage selection of one of the two

eastern variations with our recommendation being that variation WE 1 be selected as it appears to be the least environmentally damaging variation. However, because we were not provided any information regarding the relative quality of the existing forested areas and wetlands that would be impacted by the variations nor locations of recent T&E species records, we reserve the option to provide additional comments, should this information become available.

These comments have been prepared under the authority of the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act (16 U.S.C. 661 et. seq.) and are consistent with the intent of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, the Endangered Species Act of 1973, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Mitigation Policy. This letter provides endangered species technical information only, and does not fulfill the requirements of Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act. If project plans change or portions of the proposed project were not evaluated, it is our recommendation that the changes be submitted for our review.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment on this issue. Should you have any questions or require additional information, please contact Andy King at (812) 334-4261 ext. 216.

Sincerely yours

Scott E. Pruitt Field Supervisor

cc: Ken Westlake, Chief, Environmental Planning and Evaluation Branch, EPA Region 5
Katie Gremillion-Smith, Indiana Division of Fish and Wildlife, Indianapolis, IN

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UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY REGION5

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Post-It* Fax Note 7671 Date 3/15 Pages 2

To From Co./Dept. M/EL GYBVAR Co. ND OF

Phone 4 B/A Phone 8

Fax 8-765 9635662 Fax 8

John Baxter, Division Administrator Federal Highway Administration - Indiana Division 575 N. Pennsylvania St., Room 254 Indianapolis, Indiana 46204

RE: I-69 Evansville to Indianapolis, Indiana

Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) - Washington Variations

Dear Mr. Baxter:

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 5 (U.S. EPA) received your February 28, 2003, letter with three (one page) attachments. Your letter states that INDOT's Recommended 3C Alternative, chosen by Governor O'Bannon, includes four variations around Washington in Daviess County and that INDOT would like to choose one preferred variation. Your letter requests comments from our agency regarding the four Washington variations in Alternative 3C.

We appreciate the opportunity to comment, though we would note that any comments we provide would be outside the public comment period for the Tier I DEIS and prior to release of the Tier I Final EIS (FEIS) and our chance to review the Tier I FEIS. Consequently, any comments we provide are in addition to our original comments in U.S. EPA's November 7, 2002, comment letter on the Tier I DEIS which remain relevant and appropriate, and continue to represent our position on the Tier I DEIS. Also, given the tight time lines provided for comment, our comments below are solely based on the information provided with your letter. We would like to reserve the ability to provide additional comments if warranted and as additional information becomes available.

Based on the two maps and the limited range of environmental factors listed on Table 1. Summary of Selected Impacts for the 4 Washington Variations attached to your letter, it appears that Variations WE 1 and WE 2 (cast side variations) may have less adverse impact on the environment then Variations WW 1 and WW 2 (west side variations) for Alternative 3C. We encourage selection of an alternative that minimizes adverse environmental impacts. That being said, due to the tight time frame for comments it is difficult to provide more detailed comments based on the summary information provided with the letter because it does not provide information on the full range of environmental factors for consideration.

2

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment. We look forward to continue to work with you on this project.

Sincerely,

Kenneth A. Westlake, Chief

Environmental Planning and Evaluation Branch

cc: J. Bryan Nicol, Commissioner, INDOT

Doug Shelton, Regulatory Branch, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers - Louisville District Scott Pruitt, Field Supervisor, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service - Bloomington Field Office Lori Kaplan, Commissioner, Indiana Department of Environmental Management John Goss, Director, Indiana Department of Natural Resources

United States Department of Agriculture

Natural Resources Conservation Service

6013 Lakeside Blvd. Indianapolis, IN 46268 031177

March 6, 2003

Robert Dirks, P.E. Environmental Engineer U.S. Dept. of Transportation Federal Highway Administration 575 N. Pennsylvania St., Rm 254 Indianapolis, IN 46204

Dear Mr. Dirks:

This letter is in response to your letter dated February 29, 2003, concerning I-69 Indianapolis to Evansville Tier I EIS-Washington Variations. In the consideration of farmland acres involved in the four alternatives for bypassing Washington, the alternatives on the west side involve more farmland acres. The alternatives on the east side of Washington involve less farmland, but more of these acres are prime farmland. When considering farmland acres affected, it makes little difference which alternative is selected.

If you need additional information, please contact Phil Bousman at 317-290-3200, extension 385.

Sincerely,

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Forest Service Hoosier National Forest Supervisor's Office 61,85 199-0001-09D 811 Constitution Avenue 031175

Bedford, IN 47421 Phone: 812-275-5987 Fax: 812-279-3423 TDD: 812-275-7817

File Code: 1950-5

Date: March 4, 2003

Dr. Tom Cervone Bernardin-Lochmueller & Associates, Inc. 6200 Vogel Road Evansville, IN 47715

Dear Dr. Gervone:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment about the four Washington variations in Alternative 3C for I-69.

I have reviewed the summary of selected impacts for the four variations included in Robert E. Dirks' letter dated February 28th. I recommend WE1 because it contains overall the least environmental impacts on a wide variety of the criteria presented on Table 1. WE2 would be an excellent second choice.

Sincerely,

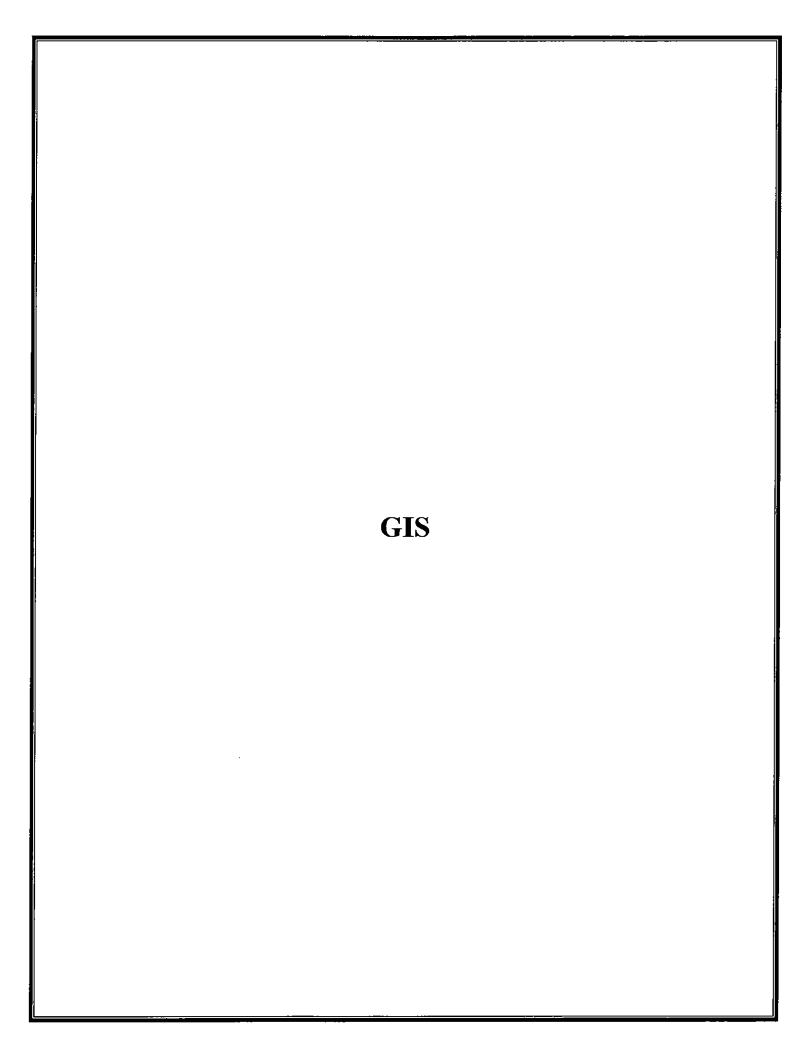
KENNETH G. DAY

Forest Supervisor

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MAR - 6 2003

BLA



----Original Message----

From: Steinmetz, John Charles [mailto:jsteinm@indiana.edu]

Sent: Monday, May 05, 2003 3:13 PM

To: JOSADCZUK@indot.state.in.us; LSADLER@indot.state.in.us

Cc: tcervone@blainc.com; disley@blainc.com Subject: Karst and Caves Coverage.doc

Karst and Cave Coverage: Response to Public Comment

Indiana Geological Survey An Institute of Indiana University

Memorandum

DATE:

5 May 2003

TO:

Janice Osadczuk and Lyle Sadler (INDOT)

FROM:

John C. Steinmetz, Director, Indiana Geological Survey

COPIES:

Tom Cervone and David Isley (BLA)

SUBJECT:

Karst and Cave Coverage: Response to Public Comment

Bernardin, Lochmueller, and Associates (BLA) was contracted by the Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) to help produce a Tier 1 Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the proposed I-69 Project.

On January 1, 2000, the Indiana Geological Survey (IGS) was subcontracted by BLA to collect selected existing regional maps, produce metadata, and provide the maps and their associated metadata in digital form to BLA, INDOT, and the public. The subcontract terminated on December 31, 2001. The maps were used by BLA and INDOT in the preparation of the Tier 1 DEIS, which was completed in July 2002.

Among the digital maps that were provided by IGS were several related to karst features in south-central Indiana: (1) a map showing sinkhole areas and sinking-stream basins (titled "KARST_MM65_SW"), (2) a map showing the number of cave openings per square kilometer (titled

"KARST_CAVE_DENSITY_SW"), and (3) a map showing springs (titled

"KARST_SPRINGS_MM65_SW"). These were derived from Miscellaneous Map 65, which was completed in 1997 and published by the IGS in 2002. The sinkhole areas and sinking-stream basins were originally mapped by Richard Powell, who is a recognized authority on karst in Indiana, whereas the springs and cave openings were derived from a database compiled by the Indiana Cave Survey (ICS) and provided by Sam Frushour, who is a member of both the Indiana Cave Survey and a staff member of the Indiana Geological Survey. As stated on the ICS Web site, the ICS is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to the collection and maintenance of data on all caves and related features within Indiana, including their study, conservation, exploration, and knowledge.

The portion of Indiana's karst area that lies within the I-69 study area extends a distance of more than 100 miles and is as wide as 30 miles. The digital maps that were provided by IGS are among the best publicly available maps showing selected karst-related features across that entire region. They were created in a systematic manner using a consistent methodology, so that each county within the region was mapped in a similar fashion.

The following statement is quoted from the published metadata for KARST_CAVE_DENSITY_SW:

Completeness_Report:

According to an estimate by Samuel S. Frushour, the predecessor coverage named "CAVES" includes about 95 percent of known cave entrances. All cave entrances are large enough to allow entry by a human being; the vast majority of associated caves are more than 25 feet in length, and only a few are less than 25 feet.

On the other hand, as indicated in the metadata, the maps of karst-related features were intended to be used solely as an overview of karst on a broad regional scale. Any map, whether paper or digital, should not be used at more detailed scales than its source scale. As indicated in its metadata, the source scale for KARST_MM65_SW is 1:126,720. Therefore, this map layer is explicitly unsuitable for detailed mapping of small areas at scales that show more detail than 1:126,720. This and other limitations of the map layer are described in the published metadata:

(1) Attribute_Accuracy_Report:

KARST_MM65_SW contains one internal attribute that delineates sinkhole areas (SHA) and sinking-stream basins (SSB). This attribute is based on Richard L. Powell's work maps and is assumed to be accurate to the source scale.

(2) Completeness_Report:

SHA refers to sinkhole areas larger than 80 acres. Some sinkholes may exist outside the areas delineated as "SHA," and some sinkholes may exist within the areas designated as "SSB," but such areas are not shown in this shapefile.

Besides these digital maps, a great deal of additional information exists regarding karst features in Indiana. This information is in the form of hundreds of paper maps and reports, both published and unpublished. Many of these - such as the report provided to BLA by Mr. Frushour on November 5, 2002 - provide highly detailed information within small areas. However, the systematic collection, organization, standardization, and digitization of all such detailed information was beyond the scope of the IGS subcontract, which mandated only the collection of existing regional maps for the purpose of a Tier 1 evaluation. Also, some of the information included by Mr. Frushour in his letter of November 5, 2002, may have been acquired in summer and autumn of 2002, which was after publication of the Tier 1 DEIS in July 2002.

While the map layers that were provided are among the best available resources for preliminary planning on a regional scale and for preparation of the Tier 1 DEIS, they may be inadequate for detailed engineering planning within smaller subregional areas. Once a particular area of interest has been identified, it might be advisable to collect and organize all relevant maps and reports within that area as part of a detailed Tier 2 investigation.

In summary, Mr. Frushour is correct, inasmuch as the maps may be inadequate for detailed Tier 2 mapping within a selected subregion. However, as of the date of publication of the DEIS (July 2002), it is my professional opinion that the maps provided by the IGS, compiled in an objective and systematic manner across the entire region, were the best available for the intended purpose of a preliminary Tier 1 evaluation of alternative routes on a regional scale.

From: Forrest Brown [mailto:fbrown@osmre.gov]

Sent: Friday, January 24, 2003 1:58 PM

To: indot@ai.org

Subject: ArcView shapefile data for I-69 routing

I am a GIS Coordinator for the Division of Reclamation in the Department of Natural Resources. The availability of your I-69 maps compels me to inquire about the availability of ArcView or ArcGIS data files.

Southwestern Indiana is the coal mining region. I function to develop and obtain GIS data relating to the area, and the southwestern Indiana GIS Atlas information is integral to our data system. I wish to include the I-69 information.

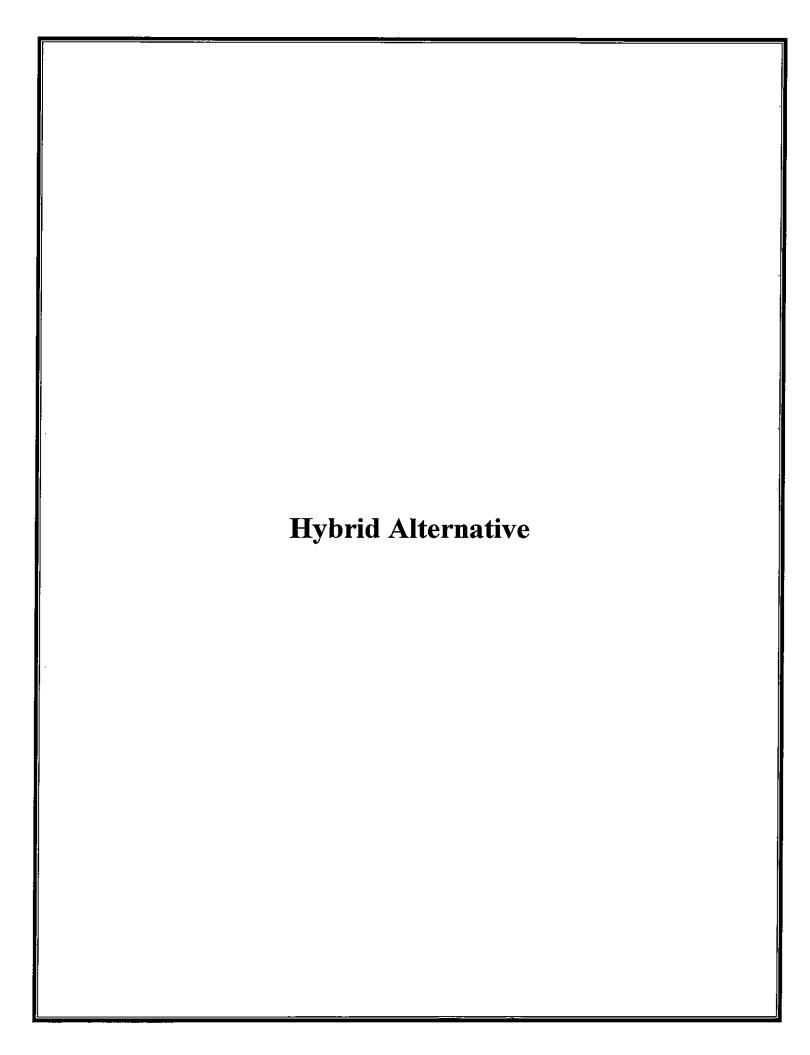
Availability of the data files will serve to provide our staff with functional information to consider relationships among the new highway construction area and mine sites: old and active mines. We also have a DNR Fish & Wildlife staff member assigned to our office for mitigation of mining impacts and wetland areas. Therefore, our interest is comprehensive in that context.

This GIS data set will allow us to appropriately, and properly, evaluate these relationships and discuss any impact issues with the mining industry and mining area landowners, and related agency and public stakeholders.

If not available currently, please consider my request as the GIS data set is made available. Contact me for any elaboration. Thank you for your consideration.

Forrest Brown
GIS Coordinator
DNR Division of Reclamation
RR 2 Box 129
Jasonville, IN 47438

Phone: 812-665-2207 Fax: 812-665-5041



TO: 765 463 5602 17:21 No.003 P.02 NOV 25'02



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY **REGIONS** 77 WEST JACKSON BOULEVARD CHICAGO, IL 60604-3590

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MENLY TO THE ATTENTION OF:

NOV 22 2002

(R-191)

John Baxter, Division Administrator Federal Highway Administration - Indiana Division 575 N. Pennsylvania St., Room 254 Indianapolis, Indiana 46204

J. Bryan Nichol, Commissioner Indiana Department of Transportation 100 North Senate Avenue Room N755 Indianapolis, Indiana 46204-2228

Dear Mr. Baxter and Mr. Nichol:

Thank you for your letter of November 13, 2002. I am writing to clarify the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) position on the hybrid alternative/s currently being looked at hy the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) for the Interstate 69 Tier 1 Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS).

Our November 7, 2002 comment letter on the DRIS included several recommendations. Among them was a recommendation that PHWA and INDOT consider developing additional alternatives that combine or connect portions of the 12 alternatives studied in the DEIS to determine if any would have less adverse environmental impact than the DEIS's 5 "preferred alternatives" while meeting the project's transportation goals. That recommendation followed discussion during our Agency's October 17th meeting with you in which we suggested FHWA and INDOT may want to look at hybrid alternatives as a concept and provided an example. Your November 13th letter confirms that FHWA and INDOT are evaluating that example. We are pleased that you are evaluating that hybrid, and we await the results of that analysis. You may wish to evaluate other hybrid options as well, to determine their environmental and transportation performance.

I want to emphasize that HPA docs not endorse any hybrid alternative at this time, nor have we drawn any conclusions about the viability of the example referenced above or any other hybrid

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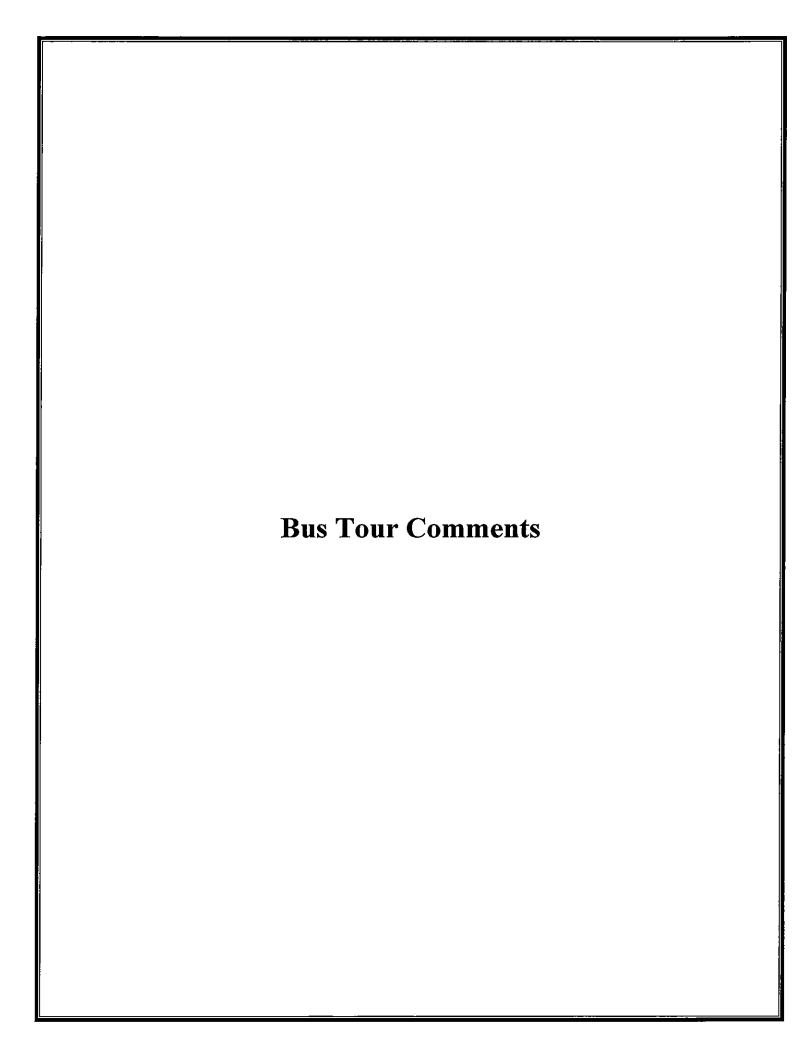
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that PHWA and INDOT may choose to evaluate. We expect to review and comment on a detailed analysis of any hybrid alternative/s you decide to evaluate. In the meantime, our position on the 1-69 Tier 1 DEIS remains as stated in our November 7, 2002 comment letter.

We look forward to continued cooperation with your agencies on this important project.

Very truly yours,

Thomas V. Skinner Regional Administrator





UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

REGION5 77 WEST JACKSON BOULEVARD

CHICAGO, IL 60604-3590

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JUL 18 2002

REPLY TO THE ATTENTION OF

JUL 16 2002

BLA

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020858

Kia M. Gillette Bernardin • Lochmueller & Associates, Inc. 6200 Vogel Road Evansville, Indiana 47714-4006

U.S. EPA's Revisions to the comments in the "Bus Tour, I-69 Tier I Environmental Re: Impact Statement (Evansville to Indianapolis) June 4th and 5th 2002 - DRAFT".

Dear Ms. Gillette:

The United States Environmental Protection Agency, Region 5 (U.S. EPA) received your transmittal letter dated June 26, 2002, with above referenced attachment. Your letter requests we review the attached comments for accuracy. Cathy Garra, Virginia Laszewski and I reviewed our trip notes and request the following be included as part of the comments made during the June 4th and June 5th bus tour of the 5 corridor alternatives:

- Alternative 5 would have to be modified to avoid pedestrian/bike trail areas in National Forest. Public parkland and designated recreational areas of forests cannot be used, per section 4(f) of the 1966 Department of Transportation Act, unless 1) avoidance creates major problems, and 2) all reasonable measures are taken to minimize harm. (Janice Osadczuk, INDOT)
- Mr. Richards noted that many of the counties in southern Indiana's karst region have no zoning and most residences and facilities have on-site septic systems. He recommended that access to a new highway be limited, so that development is focused on areas that are sewered.
- What is current and projected employment at Crane Naval Weapons facility? That should be documented in DEIS for possible impacts on traffic. (U.S. EPA)
- U.S. EPA has grave concerns about the impacts to Bean Blossom Bottoms and the Tincher Pond Special Area within Hoosier National Forest associated with Alternatives 5A, 5B, 3A, and 3B.
- We request you modify the last bullet in the DRAFT to read: "If a preferred alternative is not identified in the DEIS, U.S. EPA will assign a rating to each alternative and the entire DEIS will receive the most severe rating of all the alternatives." (U.S. EPA)

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- Bean Blossom Bottoms area has not had a comprehensive survey for threatened and endangered species. Such a survey should be done. (Sycamore Land Trust)
- Portions of Monroe Morgan State Forest, designated for public recreation in the forest management plan, are covered by Section 4(f), and should be avoided. (INDOT)
- Routing of I-69 from Bloomington to I-465 should be evaluated for maximum use of SR 37. That would involve lots of business relocations close to I-465, but other proposed connection options just south of I-465 would take out some extensive residential subdivisions. (Janice Osadczuk, INDOT)
- Alternative 5A clips a portion of Bradford Woods (Indiana University's outdoor education center). That's an unacceptable Section 4(f) impact, so that alignment will have to be tweaked. (INDOT)
- Tom Cervone noted frequency of early morning fogs along White/Wabash/Patoka River flood plains south of Vincennes. U.S. EPA suggested best design practices be used from other fog-prone roads around the country.
- BLA (consultant) will attempt to make some selective corridor shifts to reflect discussion
 on field trip. However, if they can't keep DEIS on schedule by doing that, they will add
 narrative that additional avoidance efforts will be considered in Tier 2 NEPA studies and
 subsequent final designs. (Robert Dirks, FHWA)

If you have any questions, please contact me at 312-886-2910 or e-mail at westlake.kenneth@epa.gov or Virginia Laszewski of my staff at 312-886-7501 or e-mail at laszewski.virginia@epa.gov.

Sincerely,

Kenneth A. Westlake, Chief

Environmental Planning and Evaluation Branch Office of Strategic Environmental Analysis

cc: Janice Osadczuk

Indiana Department of Transportation

Robert Dirks

Federal Highway Administration, Indiana Division



Indiana Department of Natural Resources

Frank O'Bannon, Governor John Goss, Director

Executive Office Room W256 402 West Washington Street Indianapolis, IN 46204-2748 Telephone: (317) 232-4020 FAX: (317) 233-6811

July 16, 2002

Mr. Tom Cervone, PhD
Environmental Manager
Bernardin Lochmueller & Associates, Inc.
6200 Vogel Road
Evansville, IN 47715-4006

Re: DNR #9642, I-69 Indianapolis to Evansville Highway

Dear Mr. Cervone:

The Indiana Department of Natural Resources has reviewed the above referenced project per your request. Our agency offers the following comments for your information and in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Action of 1969.

The Flood Control Act, IC 14-28-1, requires the formal approval of the Department of Natural Resources for any construction, excavation, or filling in or on the floodway of a stream having a drainage area greater than 1 square mile. Unless eligible for the exemption contained in Section 22 (b)(2), it appears that many of the stream crossings and related roadwork for each alternative may require permits under this Act. Please include a copy of this letter with any permit application submission.

In general, DNR supports the idea of acquiring mitigation lands adjacent to existing publicly owned land with the intent to transfer the land to public ownership. This practice would not only provide habitat with the mitigation areas, but would greatly enhance the publicly owned lands adjacent to it. Transferring the property to an entity such as the Patoka River NWR would also better ensure its future protection.

During the June 4th and 5th tour of the proposed alternatives, there were discussions about possible mitigation sites. Sites with the acquisition area for the Patoka River NWR, sites adjacent to Beanblossom Bottoms, and Goose Pond/Bee Hunter Ditch wetland complex (owned by Wilder Farms) were looked at on the tour. While DNR would support using areas within or adjacent to the Patoka River NWR and Beanblossom Bottoms, the idea of using Goose Pond may have limitations depending upon the details. Most of the Goose Pond area is planned for inclusion in the Wetland Reserve Program (WRP) as restored wetlands. The proposal to use the area as mitigation involves raising a state road to increase the inundated areas within the complex. While this would create more open water, some of the shallow water WRP lands may be inundated with water levels too high to provide maximum wildlife diversity. As more details become available this issue will require further study.

Letter to Mr. Tom Cervone Page 2 July 16, 2002

There are five (5) alternatives that were presented in the Tier I Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The following is information relative to the findings in the Natural Heritage Program's database in regard to each alternative.

From an ecological perspective, Alternatives 3 and 5 are most adverse with regard to their impacts. Both would result in considerable adversity to forest, wildlife and geological features, and both would impact protected public properties. Alternative 2 and 4 are less problematic, but both would still result in negative ecological impacts and potential losses. Alternative 2 has less impact than 4 as it avoids the Plainville Sand region and bottoms of the White River in Daviess County. Alternative 1 offers the fewest problems from an ecological perspective. Potential impacts of Alternative 1 appear to be minimized with little or no loss of protected properties, although some negative environmental consequences could be anticipated.

It is important to note that in many if not most cases, shifting a route minimally to avoid direct hits of significant or ecological sites or protected properties does not necessarily negate adverse impacts. For example, even if Alternative 3 were modified to avoid hitting Beanblossom Bottoms Nature Preserve, the corridor would still necessarily cross the Beanblossom Creek valley in its proximity. It would also likely directly impact nearby private properties which may be acquired and added to this Preserve in the future, greatly decrease the Preserve's aesthetics, audibly and visually, with traffic noise at all times and light at night, as well as result in direct impacts to wildlife. The crayfish frog (*Rana aerolata circulosa*), besides being listed state endangered in Indiana, is experiencing population losses throughout its range. The northeastern most known documentation of this species within its range occurs within Beanblossom Creek valley. This population is currently surviving tenuously at best. Locating the highway corridor within the vicinity would likely cause additional stress and negatively impact the existing population.

Enclosed is a list of specific areas of concern regarding each alternative, along with a corresponding numbered map of each alternative. They are listed in a south to north sequence for each alternative. Many of the sites listed are merely within the study corridor and are not directly affected. The major areas of concern are indicated with an asterisk.

The following comments are in regard to the potential impacts to fish, wildlife and botanical recourses. In DNR's view, Alternative 5 would have the most detrimental impacts to these resources of all the alternatives. This alternative would potentially impact the following areas; the Patoka River bottoms area [ecologically diverse wetlands and prior converted areas within the acquisition boundary of the Patoka River National Wildlife Refuge (NWR)], Martin State Forest, parts of Hoosier National Forest (NF), Tincher Pond (a Hoosier NF Special Area that has globally rare troglobitic species), Blue Springs Cavern, and Bradford Woods in Morgan County. Much of this route would pass through heavily forested areas and karst areas. Karst areas present special problems due to the high potential to disturb fragile subterranean systems. The Tincher Pond area is currently being surveyed for rare troglobitic species. Although only a portion of the area has yet to be surveyed, to date, 18 troglobitic species have

Letter to Mr. Tom Cervone Page 3 July 16, 2002

been found. Areas with 20 or more troglobitic species are considered to be global hotspots. Likewise, Blue Springs Cavern is recognized as harboring one of the four best and largest populations of the state endangered northern blind cave fish (*Amblyopsis Spelaea*). Some of the species found in this area are imperiled or critically imperiled species endemic to the area. This route also has a high potential to affect other federal and state listed species such as the copperbelly water snake within the Patoka River bottoms areas. Due to the large number of significant natural areas that could potentially be impaired, Alternative 5 is considered highly adverse.

Alternatives 3 and 4 would also impact the Patoka River bottoms areas like Alternative 5. Alternative 3 comes critically close to the Beanblossom Bottoms complex of wetlands (owned by USFWS and Sycamore Land Trust). Sycamore Land Trust is actively trying to acquire more land to enlarge and restore the wetlands complex. As proposed, Alternative 3 could impair that goal. Alternative 2 would utilize a portion of the existing US 41 corridor and would minimize wetland impacts along the Patoka River area. Alternative 1 would by far have the least impacts to fish and wildlife resources. This alternative would utilize the existing US 41 and I-70 corridors. Relatively little undisturbed land would be affected. From the standpoint of fish and wildlife values, Alternative 1 has the fewest impacts.

With regard to forest impacts resulting from this project, Alternative 1 would also have the lowest impact. Where feasible, incorporate the following in the project plans; forest product utilization, minimization and/or mitigation of potential impacts and forest values in the economic impact. A 10-year impact of this project is appropriate when discussing timber impacts. Minimize the right-of-way width within forested areas. Avoid impacts to all managed wild lands, which would include publicly owned lands and land placed under conservation easements (such as Forest Legacy), or lands under other long-term conservation programs.

Our agency appreciates this opportunity to be of service and apologizes for not being able to respond sooner. Please do not hesitate to contact Christie Kiefer, Environmental Coordinator at (317) 232-4160 or toll free at 1-877-928-3755 if we can be of further assistance.

Sincerely,

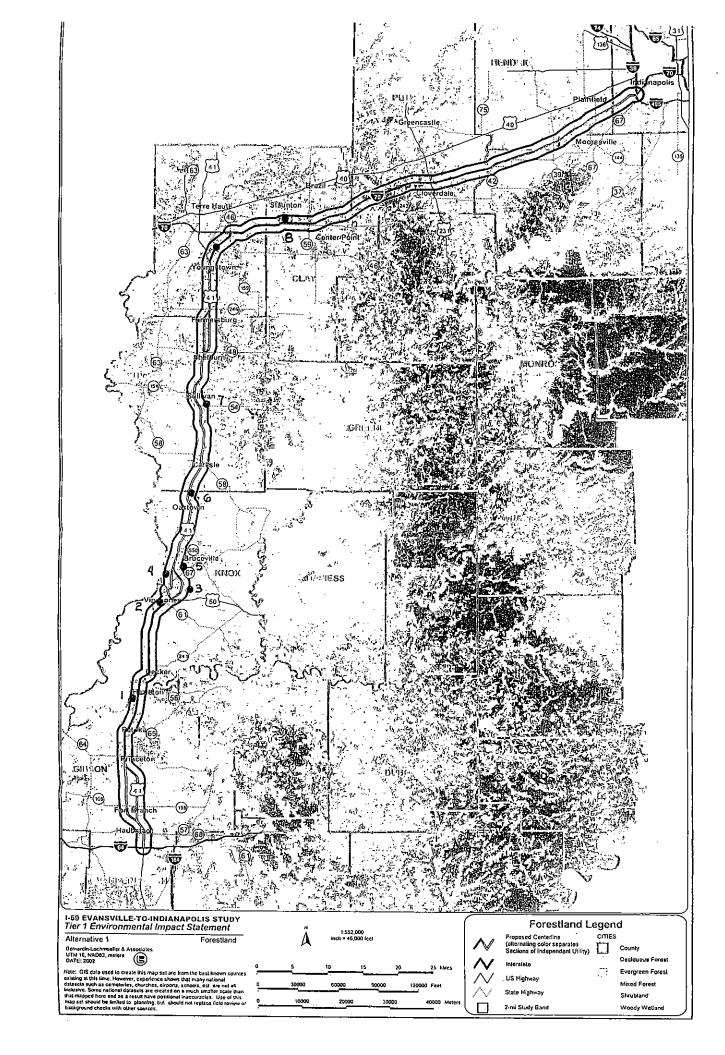
Paul J. Ehret
Deputy Director

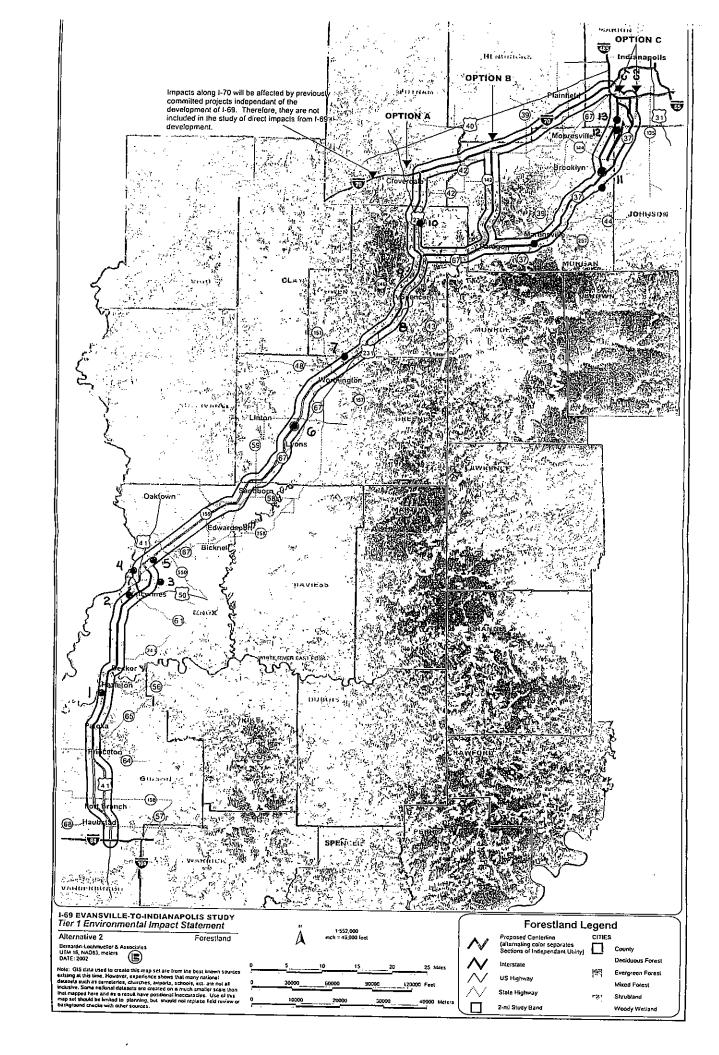
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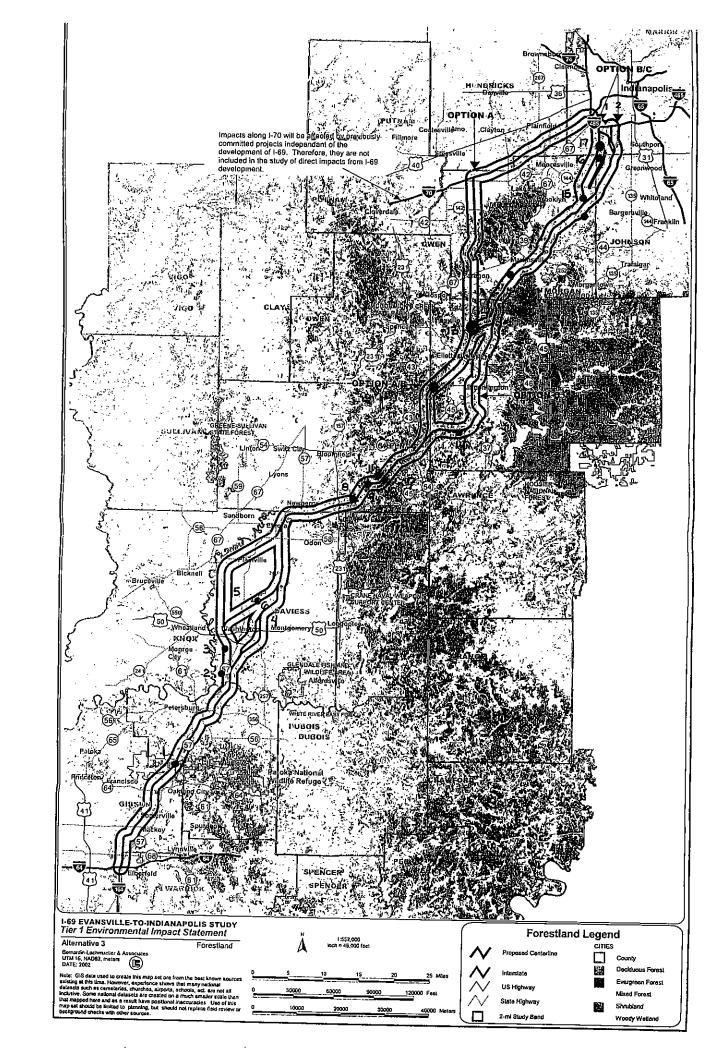
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Alternative One
1) Patoka Swamp Natural Area
2) Sugarloaf Mound IHT acquisition site
3)McClure Park Property (Division of Forestry)
4) Quabache Trails Knox County Park
5) Knox County Park
6) rare plant site (Isoetes melanopoda, Bacopa rotundifolia)
7) Busseron Bottoms Natural Area
8) Chinook Fish and Wildlife Area (Division of Fish & Wildlife)
Alternative Two
1) Patoka Swamp Natural Area
2) Sugarloaf Mound IHT acquisition site
3) McClure Park Property (Division of Forestry)
4)Quabache Trails Knox County Park
5) Knox County Park
6) Buzan Cemetery prairie remnant (Natural Area Registry Site)
7) Arney great blue heron rookery (100 +/- active nests)
8)bald eagle sites / White River
9)* severe forest fragmentation through Owen County
10) Russel Hamm Natural Area (DePauw University)
Option B
Option C
11) Waverly Bog Natural Area Registry Site (circumneutral seep wetland)
12) * Bargersville great blue heron rookery (500 + active nests)
13) Mann Hill County Park and IHT acquisition sites
Alternative Three
1) Patoka River & NWR
2) notable seep wetland
3) notable seep wetland
4) wide scale impacts upon loggerhead shrike population stronghold (Daviess Co.)
5) drastic visual impact to Capeheart Sandflats Nature Preserve (extensive view
of White River valley bottoms)
6) * Thousand Acre Woods Nature Preserve (TNC)
7) * severe forest fragmentation through Greene County
8) unnamed spring
9)* Combs Property (Division of Forestry)
10) Rock Springs
11) Ashcraft Cave
Option A/B
12) * Keisler Foresty Legacy Property
13) * Beanblossom Bottoms Nature Preserve (Sycamore Land Trust)
Option C
14) Smith Springs Cave
Option B/C
15) Waverly Bog Natural Area Registry Site (circumneutral seep wetland)
16) * Bargersville great blue heron rookery (500 + active nests)
17) Mann Hill County Park & IHT acquisition sites
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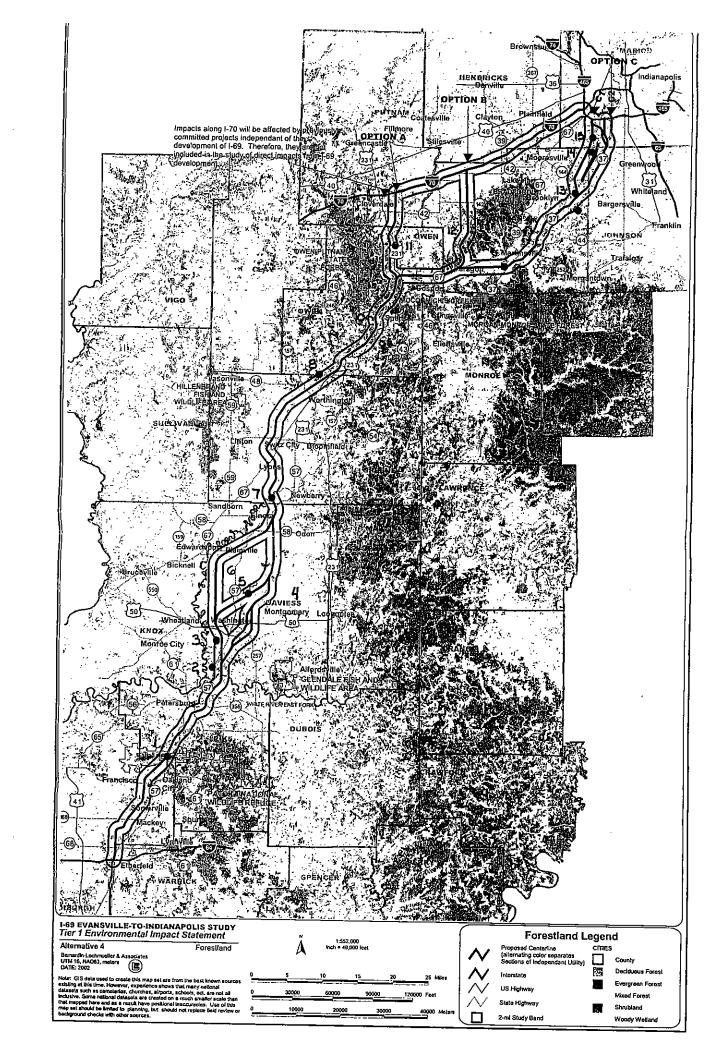
Alternative Four

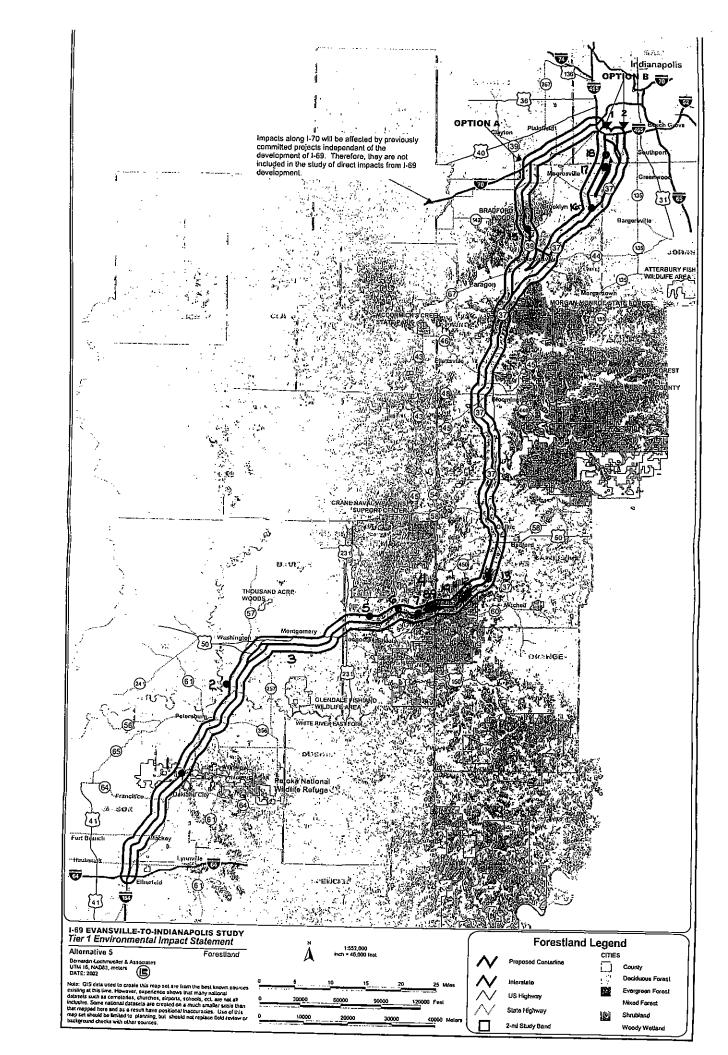
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1) Patoka River crossing & NWR
2) notable seep wetland
3) notable seep wetland
4) wide scale impacts upon loggerhead shrike population stronghold (Daviess Co.)
5)* Thousand Acre Woods Nature Preserve (The Nature Conservancy)
6) drastic visual impact to Capeheart Sandflats Nature Preserve (extensive view
of White River valley bottoms)
7) White River crossing (poor location - numerous sloughs, wetlands, floodplain
forest remnants)
8)Arney great blue heron rookery (100 +/- nests)
9) bald eagle sites / White River
10)* severe forest fragmentation through Owen County
Option A
11) Russel Hamm Natural Area (DePauw University)
Option B
12) forest fragmentation and severe watershed effects north of Paragon
Option C
13) Waverly Bog Natural Area Registry Site (circumneutral seep wetland)
14)* Bargersville great blue heron rookery (500 + active nests)
15) Mann Hill County Park & IHT sites
Alternative Five
1) Patoka River crossing & NWR
2) notable seep wetland
3) wide scale impacts upon loggerhead shrike population stronghold (Daviess Co.)
4)* severe forest fragmentation through Martin and southeast Lawrence Counties
5) chalybeate seep spring
6) McBrides Bluff natural area (USFWS easement)
7)* Martin State Forest (incl Gibson Rockshelter site)
8) Rizer Cave
9) chalybeate spring
10) * severe impacts on karst geological region
11)* Tincher Special Interest Area (Hoosier National Forest)
12) Fuzzy Hole Natural Area (Hoosier National Forest)
13)* Blue Springs Cavern (longest cave in state, one of four largest northern
cavefish populations)
14) severe forest fragmentation adjacent to Bradford Woods
15) Bradford Woods
Option B
16) Waverly Bog Natural Area Registry Site (circumneutral seep wetland)
17) * Bargersville great blue heron rookery (500 + active nests)
18) Mann Hill County Park & IHT acquisition sites
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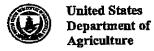








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Forest Service Hoosier National Forest Supervisor's Office 811 Constitution Avenue Bedford, IN 47421

Phone: 812-275-5987

020845

Fax: 812-279-3423 TDD: 812-275-7817

File Code: 1950-5

Date: June 14, 2002

Thomas Cervone Bernardin, Lochmueller & Associates 6200 Vogel Road Evansville, IN 47715-4006

Dear Mr. Servone,

Thank you for opportunity to meet with other agencies on June 4 at Tincher Pond to discuss the features of the area and to meet with you on June 6. We believe Tincher is a very special area and appreciated the discussions about it in connection with Alternative 5 of the I-69 study. Alternative 5 of the I-69 study uses the portion of the existing U.S. Highway 50 corridor that passes through the 4,180-acre Tincher Special Area. The 2 mile study band for Alternative 5 includes nearly all of the Tincher Special Area.

The Hoosier National Forest would prefer that I-69 not go through the Tincher Special Area for the reasons we discussed. The rest of this letter summarizes my reasons for having grave misgivings about the effects of new road construction that would be necessary in order to use the Highway 50 corridor. Additional details about Tincher are contained in the documents and GIS layer we have provided to you. These references include the *Forest Plan*, Tincher Special Area Management Plan prepared in 1995, the four-page report on the special area prepared January 8, 2002, and my January 18, 2002 letter to you.

The Tincher Special Area, as well as the rest of the Hoosier National Forest, is public land owned by the United States. One of the six major goals of the USDA Forest Service in managing these lands is "Provide for Recreation Use in Harmony with Natural Communities" (Forest Plan p. 2-3). Management guidance for the entire Hoosier National Forest is in Chapter 2 of the Forest Plan. On pages 2-17 and 2-18, guidance for recreation is found. Areas designated as special areas on the Hoosier National Forest are called Management Area (M.A.) 8.2. Guidance for providing recreation in M.A. 8.2 is found on page 2-54 of the Forest Plan. The 1995 Tincher management plan discusses recreational opportunities on pages 17, 18, and 21.

Although there are few developed recreation sites, the area is available for dispersed recreation. Backpacking, hiking, camping, hunting, and fishing are some of the recreational activities in Tincher. There is a trail to Tincher Pond and plans for another trail in the future. Berry Pond has good fishing and Georgia Pond now serves as a wetland.

In addition to recreation, special areas are managed to protect their special or unique features. The Tincher Special Area is subterranean drained, with caves, pits, sinkholes, swallow holes,





cave springs, and the longest free-drop pit in Indiana. Because the area is subterranean drained and cave ecosystems are fragile, ground-disturbing activity in the area could have far-reaching consequences. The area may be a recharge area for Blind Fish Spring, which contains blind cavefish. Groundwater contamination could have severe consequences to blind cavefish and other subterranean species in the special area. Only one dye trace has been done and the dye showed up 5 miles away and a second report 7 miles away is probably true.

There are 15 known caves and over 32 other karst features in this special area. Only a few of the caves have been inventoried for species and all inventories have been north of Highway 50. Eighteen cave species, three of which are new to science, have been found since the inventory work started in 2000. (Another species was found since our January 18, 2002 letter.) If two more cave species are found, and we expect they will be, Tincher Special Area will be a global subterranean hotspot. At least 14 of the cave fauna found to date are ranked G3 or higher.

The Tincher Special Area has a variety of habitats in addition to the caves. There are dry, open woodlands; moist forest; early successional, shrub-dominated habitat; and open lands, dominated by herbaceous cover.

Although Federal Threatened and Endangered species have not been seen in the Tincher Special Area, there is available habitat for bald eagle, gray bat, and Indiana bat. There is an Indiana bat hibernaculum about 5 miles away in Martin County. The Tincher Special Area could be providing forage and roosting habitat for the Indiana bat.

There are 13 species considered sensitive by the USDA Forest Service, which are known to occur in Tincher; 10 cave species, two plants, and one animal. There is habitat in Tincher for 19 other sensitive species. Most USDA Forest Service sensitive species are also on the state list; which you already have.

Habitat for many other species of concern (24) or management indicator species (22) is in this special area. A table is attached.

The Tincher area has not been studied intensely. We believe such surveys should be completed before a decision to utilize the Highway 50 corridor for I-69 is made:

Additional dye tracing
Heritage resource surveys
Plant and animal surveys due to the habitat that is available
Cave bioinventories

The Tincher Special Area is truly a jewel in the Hoosier National Forest. We are interested in learning more about the area and protecting the area to maintain habitat for all species in Tincher. We stated on page 21 of the Tincher management plan, "Protection of the karst features takes precedence over other values in planning and implementation of management activities."

While we do not know everything about the Tincher Special Area, we do know that cave ecosystems are fragile. These systems depend on stable levels of air, water, detritus,

temperature, and humidity. The kinds of disturbance caused by activities such as road construction could have serious negative impacts to those ecosystems and the species that depend on them.

If you have any questions, please contact Wilma Reed Marine at (812) 275-5987.

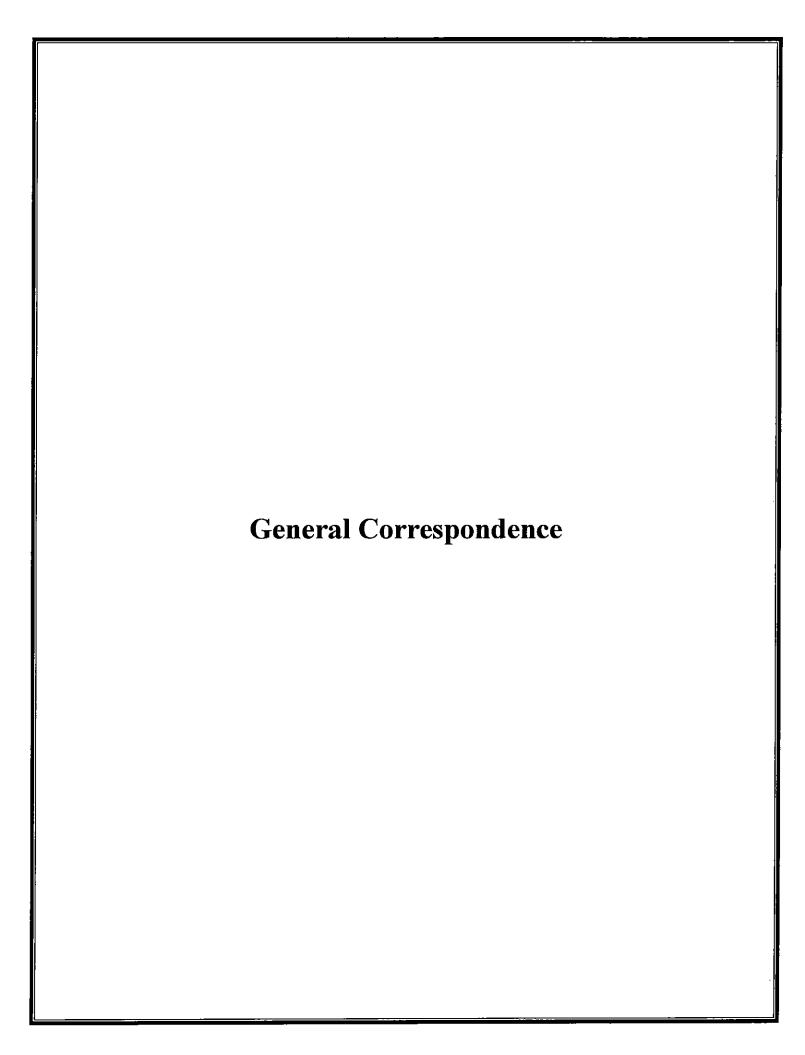
Sincerely,

KENNETH G. DAY

Forest Supervisor

Enclosure

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Indiana Department of Natural Resources

Indiana Division of Fish & Wildlife 562 DNR Road Mitchell, IN 47446 26 February 2003

Tom Cervone Bernardin-Lochmueller & Associates 6200 Vogel Road Evansville, IN 47715-4006

Dear Tom,

I have looked over the map of the preferred route from the I-69 extension Draft EIS that you sent me. I have provided you with copies of DeLorme maps that contain the proposed route and have eagle nests marked on them (in red). The nests are numbered and their history is provided on another table (cross-referenced by number). It appears that the Snakey Point nest near Oakland City is in closest proximity to the route and I have provided you with part of a topo map that shows the location in more detail. I marked in red the nest location for 2002, just southwest of the nest used in 2001. I have also included a topo with an unconfirmed nest just west of Washington. I will check this out in the next couple of weeks to see if it is indeed an eagle's nest.

Lastly I have provided you with a map of loggerhead shrike locations in the Washington (Daviess Co.) area. This is the core of their range in Indiana and I would hate to see it disrupted.

If you need additional information, let me know.

Best regards,

John Castrale

Nongame Bird Biologist

sh Caetiale

812 849-4586

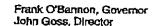
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Indiana Department of Natural Resources

Division of Minoric Preservation & Archecology-AIZ W Waddington State, WZIA-ladigraphile, IN 46214-2719 Phone 317-232 1640-Fex 317-222-0693-dhpaghdorsbeirin an

December 13, 2002

Curtis H. Tomak
Archaeologist
Indiana Department of Transportation
Environmental Assessment Section
100 North Senate Avenue
Room N848
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204-2249

Re: Archaeological sites 12Mo158, 12Mo1186, and 12 Mo1187 related or possibly related to the historical Virginia Ironworks, Monroe County, Indiana.

Dear Mr. Tomak:

We have reviewed the information provided to our office regarding the above three archaeological sites in Monroe County, Indiana. Site 12Mo158 contains intact features, including remains of the furnace, from the Virginia Ironworks, and appears to contain information related to the historic and industrial heritage and archaeology of the state. It is believed to be the only surviving 19th century blast furnace site with structural remains in Indiana. Therefore, 12Mo158 appears to be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

Site 12Mo1086 is the location of iron mines associated with the Virginia Ironworks and are some of the earliest iron mines in Indiana. This site has also intact features associated with early historic and industrial activities in Indiana. This site appears to be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

The final site, 12Mo1087, is described as a reported quarry for the sandstone for construction of the Virginia Ironworks. From the information provided, there is insufficient information to determine whether the site is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. Currently, the site may be considered potentially eligible for the National Register. Further investigations are necessary to determine its eligibility.

It appears possible that, with further investigations, the above sites and other sites and features related to the Virginia Ironworks may be delineated as a historic district.

If you have any questions please contact our office at (317) 232-1646.

Very truly yours.

for Son asmith

Director

Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology

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Indiana Department of Natural Resources

Frank O'Bannon, Governor Larry D. Macklin, Director

Division of Nature Preserves 402 W. Washington St., Rm W267 Indianapolis IN 46204

December 10, 2002

Mr. Tom Cervone Bernardin Lochmueller & Associates 6200 Vogel Road Evansville, IN 47714-4006

Dear Mr. Cervone:

I am sending to you an update of the Indiana Natural Heritage Data Center data on the endangered, threatened, or rare (ETR) documented from the I-69 study area, southwest Indiana. The information is in the zip file on the diskette. The data consists of an Arcview 3.2 shapefile, UTM 1983 Zone 16 meters projection. This updates the data sent to Cinda Bonds in May of this year.

For more information on the animal species mentioned, please contact Katie Smith, Nongame Supervisor, Division of Fish and Wildlife, 402 W. Washington Room W273, Indianapolis, Indiana 46204, (317)232-4080.

For more information on federal listed species, please contact the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service at their Bloomington, Indiana office.

> U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service 620 South Walker St. Bloomington, Indiana 47403-2121 (812)334-4261

Thank you for contacting the Indiana Natural Heritage Data Center. You may reach me at (317)232-8059 if you have any questions or need additional information.

Sincerely,

Ronald P. Hellin Ronald P. Hellmich

Indiana Natural Heritage Data Center

enclosure:

diskette

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REGIONS

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REPLY TO THE ATTENTION OF

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Mr. Gary Milhoan R.R. 3, Box 480 Solsberry, Indiana 47459

Dear Mr. Milhoan:

Thank you for your recent letter to Ms. Virginia Laszewski of my staff, transmitting your comments on the Tier 1 Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for Interstate 69 Indianapolis to Evansville. Because your letter indicated that you have shared your comments with a wide variety of groups and public agencies with an interest in this project, I trust that you have submitted them for the record to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Indiana Department of Transportation (InDOT), the agencies responsible for soliciting and considering public comments as part of their decision making process for this project. We have also added your letter to our files on this project.

I want to make clear what role the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) plays on a project such as this. In your letter, you state, "We understand that you (Ms. Laszewski) are one of the government officials with the authority to influence which of twelve I-69 alternatives will be selected for Tier 2 study." As you know, this Draft EIS was prepared by the highway agencies and their consultants under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The NEPA process does not dictate outcomes. Its function is to insure that Federal agency decision makers, when facing a possible major action with potential for significant adverse environmental impacts, thoroughly evaluate and disclose those potential impacts, including the solicitation and consideration of public comments. USEPA is required under Section 309 of the Clean Air Act to review, comment, and rate EISs issued by other Federal agencies. I have enclosed our November 7, 2002, comment package on this Tier 1 DEIS for your information. We take our role as a commenting agency very seriously, and we fully expect that our comments will receive careful consideration. We also expect to work constructively with the highway agencies and with other natural resource agencies to seek to resolve the issues raised during the comment period. However, our comments under Section 309 are advisory, and do not mandate what FHWA's final corridor decision will be. The highway agencies will next develop a Tier 1 Final EIS, considering and responding to input received during the public comment process. The Final EIS will also be subject to public comment. Tier 1 will conclude with a Record of Decision by FHWA, which FHWA must document and defend.

USEPA's primary regulatory role over this project is under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, which we administer jointly with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps). Because this project will involve filling of "Waters of the United States," including jurisdictional wetlands, FHWA will have to apply to the Corps for permit(s) under Section 404. Our agency will work closely with the Corps in reviewing permit application(s) for this project. As we indicate in our comment package, Section 404 regulations call for selection of the Least Environmentally Damaging Practicable Alternative, and outline requirements to avoid, then minimize, then compensate for wetland losses. We have offered to engage the highway agencies and other relevant agencies to discuss wetland permitting prior to the development of the Tier 1 Final EIS, to seek resolution of the serious issues we raised in our comments before a Tier 1 preferred corridor is designated.

Thank you again for sharing your opinions on this project.

Sincerely yours,

Kenneth A. Westlake

Chief, Environmental Planning and Evaluation Branch

Enclosure

cc: Robert Dirks, FHWA (without enclosure)

Janice Osadczuk, InDOT (without enclosure)

Doug Shelton, Corps-Louisville District (without enclosure)

Standard bcc's:

Originator's File Copy

EPEB Reading File OSEA Reading File

Other bcc's:

Virginia Laszewski, B-19J

Cathy Garra, WW-16J Tom Kenney, C-14J

Author:

Ken Westlake

Filename:

F: user/share/oseadocs/westlake/I-69 milhoan ltr 110802

Control Number: not applicable





United States Department of the Interior



FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

BLOOMINGTON FIELD OFFICE (ES) 620 South Walker Street Bloomington, IN 47403-2121 (812) 334-4261 FAX (812) 334-4273

July 1, 2002

Mr. John R. Baxter U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration, Indiana Division 575 North Pennsylvania Street, Room 254 Indianapolis, Indiana 46204

Dear Mr. Baxter:

This responds to your letter dated June 27, 2002, regarding species that are Federally listed, proposed for Federal listing, and candidate species that may occur within the study area of the proposed Interstate 69 (I-69) from Evansville to Indianapolis, Indiana. As requested, this letter also identifies Critical Habitat that has been designated within the study area.

It is our understanding that the Federal Highway Administration, in cooperation with the Indiana Department of Transportation, is currently preparing a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for this project. The DEIS will evaluate five alternative routes and their associated options, which traverse portions of Clay, Daviess, Gibson, Greene, Hendricks, Johnson, Knox, Lawrence, Marion, Martin, Monroe, Morgan, Owen, Pike, Putnam, Sullivan, Vanderburgh, Vigo, and Warrick counties in Indiana.

These comments have been prepared under the authority of the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act (16 U.S.C. 661 et. seq.) and are consistent with the intent of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, the Endangered Species Act of 1973, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Mitigation Policy.

Our data indicate the following species and Critical Habitat may occur in the study area;

(1) Listed species:

- · Indiana bat (Myotis sodalis), Endangered
- · Bald eagle (Haliaeetus leucocephalus), Threatened
- Fanshell mussel (Cyprogenia stegaria), Endangered
- Rough pigtoe mussel (Pleurobema plenum), Endangered
- · Fat pocketbook mussel (Potamilus capax), Endangered
- · American burying beetle (Nicrophorus americana), Endangered

2.

- (2) Proposed species: none
- (3) Candidate species: none
- (4) Designated Critical Habitat:
 - for the Indiana bat (Myotis sodalis)

This letter provides endangered species technical information only, and does not fulfill the requirements of Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act. If project plans change or portions of the proposed project were not evaluated, it is our recommendation that the changes be submitted for our review. The current accuracy of this species list needs to be verified if it is more than 90 days old and preparation of a biological assessment has yet to begin [50 CFR §402.12(e)].

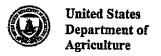
For future coordination please contact Andy King, who is the FWS' official contact for this I-69 project, at (812) 334-4261 ext. 216.

Sincerely yours

Scott E. Pruitt Field Supervisor

cc: Andrew Pelloso, IDEM, Water Quality Standards Section, Indianapolis, IN Manager, Environmental Assessment, INDOT, Rm 1107, Indianapolis, IN Tom Cervone, Bernardin, Lochmueller & Associates, Inc., Evansville, IN Indiana Division of Fish and Wildlife, Indianapolis, IN Virginia Laszewski, USEPA, B-19J, Chicago, IL Lyn MacLean, USFWS, Twin Cities, MN Bill McCoy, USFWS, Oakland City, IN

ES: AKing/334-4261/July 1, 2002



Forest Service Hoosier National Forest

811 Constitution Avenue Bedford, IN 47421 Phone: 812-275-5987 Fax: 812-279-3423 TDD: 812-275-7817

File Code: 1950-5

Date: January 18, 2002

Thomas Cervone Bernardin, Lochmueller & Associates 6200 Vogel Road Evansville, IN 47715-4006

Dear Mr. Servone,

This is in response to your request for input about the Tincher Special Area in the Hoosier National Forest for the I-69 environmental analysis. After the alternatives were narrowed to five, Alternative 5 crosses the national forest by utilizing part of the Highway 50 corridor. As you know, this part of the Hoosier National Forest has been designated as a special area due to its karst features and cave fauna. The Tincher Special Area is 4,180 acres and is split by the Highway 50 corridor.

Enclosed is a copy of the Hoosier National Forest Management Plan with all amendments, a copy of the 1995 management plan for the Tincher Special Area, a 4-page update on the Tincher Special Area dated January 8, 2002 prepared by our wildlife biologist/karst coordinator. The map of the Lost River Unit in Appendix Q of the Forest Plan shows National Forest System ownership in the area as shaded. Tincher is the 8.2 area on both sides of Highway 50. A legal description of the area is on page O-10.

The Tincher Special Area is the largest special area in the Hoosier National Forest. Nearly the entire area is subterranean drained and comprised of active and extensive karst, including caves, pits, sinkholes, swallow holes, cave springs and the longest free-drop pit in Indiana.

Most of the inventory for cave species has occurred in the part of the Tincher Special Area north of Highway 50. Even with only a partial inventory, Tincher is one of the most significant karst areas in Indiana. There are 17 known troglobitic species. Areas with 20 or more known troglobites are considered to be global subterranean hotspots. Our inventory work is ongoing and we expect to have much of the southern portion of Tincher inventoried by the end of this year. In addition, we are awaiting some reports on inventories in the northern portion, so the number of cave-related species may increase.

In addition, there is the potential for Indiana bats to occur in the Tincher Special Area. Other bats have been noted in the area. The old Gardner mine and Pennsylvania Salt Company workings are in Tincher. Surveys thus far have not identified any Indiana bats. However, there is a known Indiana bat hibernaculum about five miles away in Martin County and it is possible the Tincher Special Area could provide foraging and roosting habitat for the Indiana bat.

RECEIVED



The Tincher special has one designated recreation site, Tincher Pond. Berry Pond has potential for dispersed recreation use since it has good fishing. Georgia Pond has been breached and now serves as a wetland. There are no designated trails in the area, although there continues to be some illegal horse and off-road vehicle use of the area.

Page 2

The northern part of the area has three county roads. The Tincher Valley Ridge Road is on the Lawrence County auto tour route with Gardner Mine listed as an interpreted site. Bicycle use occurs on County Road 22.

Other activities in Tincher include hunting, hiking, and caving. Access is limited due to few parking areas. The Georgia Radio Tower is also in the area. The tower is owned by the Indiana State Police and is under a special use permit on the national forest.

The Hoosier National Forest manages special areas to protect, perpetuate or restore their special features and values. Management is also done for Federally listed threatened, endangered, and proposed species, state listed species and Regional Forester's sensitive species.

Cave species are particularly susceptible to a wide variety of disturbances since they are located in restricted cave environments. These disturbances include pesticides and herbicides, other hazardous materials, road salting, and sedimentation.

Please contact Wilma Marine if we can provide additional information for your analysis or if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

KENNETH G. DAY Forest Supervisor

Enclosures



INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

PATRICK R. RALSTON, DIRECTOR

Division of Outdoor Recreation 402 W. Washington St., Rm. 271 Indianapolis, Indiana 46204 317-232-4070

January 31, 1992

RECEIVED

Mr. Robert E. Hittle, Director Frvironmental Services

FEB 4 1992

D.E. McGillam & Associates, Inc.

McGILLEM & ASSOC.

Park 77

77 South Girls School Road, Suite 101 Indianapolis, IN 46231

RE: DNR Nos. 4297 and 4321 - Southwest Indiana Regional Highway Corridor Study - Section II - Petersburg to Newberry

Dear Mr. Hittle:

The Indiana Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) has reviewed the above referenced project and offers the following comments for your information. As project planning proceeds, we request further coordination to assure that natural resources impacts are avoided or minimized (or both) to the fullest extent.

As with segments I and III of this project, this segment will require the formal approval of the IDNR for construction in a floodway, pursuant to the Flood Control Act (IC-13-2-22). Approval will be required for any construction, excavation, or filling in any floodway which has a drainage area of one square mile or greater.

Regardless of the route designed or chosen, it appears that the proposed project will impact hundreds of acres of forest lands. At present, forest lands comprise less than 17% of Indiana's land use. Therefore, a loss of this magnitude will be significant and include lost timber resources and annual timber growth, decreased wildlife and biodiversity, and the loss of air and water quality contributions that forests provide. Among other issues, planning should focus on minimizing impacts so that forest resources may be managed properly for the benefit of current and future generations. In addition, the following points should be considered during formulation of your report:

- * Public forest lands, e.g. Pike State Forest and Sugar Hill Fish and Wildlife Area, constitute lands held in the public trust. Corridor selection should avoid all such lands. Mitigation for public land losses should be at a ten to one (10:1) ratio, which is consistent with other settlements of public lands taken.
- * Both direct and indirect impacts of rights-of-way clearings should be addressed. Cleared paths and subsequent construction result in considerable edge affect with substantial reductions of quality hardwood production. Changes in water tables and drainage patterns extend beyond rights-of-way and often result in lowered tree vigor and higher tree mortality.
- * Classified Forests should be avoided. These areas have been set aside by private landowners in accordance with prepared forest stewardship plans.

- * Mitigation for forest losses should be incorporated into the plan and should include, but not limited to, reforestation of open acreage in the region at a three to one (3:1) ratio and proper utilization of cleared tree resources.
- * Employment of a professional forester to manage the sale and utilization of timber. This will assure protection of adjoining/unaffected lands from unmanaged harvests and maximize returns to forest landowners.
- * Inclusion of plans to provide access to lands rendered inaccessible due to the project.
- * Portions of Sugar Hill Fish and Wildlife Area have been acquired or developed (or both) with federal Land and Water Conservation Act (LAWCON) funds. Any negative impacts to this or other LAWCON sites may require a Section 6(f) conversion.

Our agency has particular concern for the portion of Segment II which begins just northeast of Plainville and ends just north of the East Fork of White River. This extremely significant ecological area (see enclosure) consists of wind deposited sand dunes which formerly supported a complex mosaic of dry, savanna and prairie-like vegetation. Small wetlands occurred in the poorly drained sand flats. Numerous species of southern and western affinities occurred in the dunes, while the ephemeral wetlands often contained rare disjunct plant species of coastal Atlantic origins. Despite almost complete conversion to agriculture, numerous small remnants remain which are usually characterized by state listed plant species (see enclosed) and other species of exceptional interest. Due to the area's small size, its past and present ecological significance, and the paucity of these natural remnants, negative impacts will likely represent significant losses to the state's natural diversity. We recommend and request close coordination during the planning process to avoid impacts to this area.

The Natural Heritage Program's data indicate that a number of species occur in the project vicinity. These include the the loggerhead shrike (Lanius ludovicianus), northern harrier (Circus cyaneus), common barn owl (Tyto alba), and bobcat (Lynx rufus) which are listed as state endangered. Potential impacts to these species should be addressed during subsequent project planning. In addition, the data indicate that two state listed species of special concern occur in the vicinity of the proposed crossing of the East Fork of White River. These include the eastern sand darter (Ammocrypta pellucida) and the blue sucker (Cycleptus elongatus). To ascertain the extent of impacts to these and other species, our agency recommends that intensive fishery and mussel surveys be conducted in the vicinity of the proposed crossing.

Given these concerns and the presented alternatives, our agency recommends consideration of the following route for construction of Segment II. From north to south, start at Al. Segment B2 is unacceptable, as it would impact a large amount of wetlands associated with White River. Proceed on A2 and then A3. In sections 1 and 12, T.4N., R.W., Plainville Quad, modify the route to avoid the sand dunes to the fullest extent possible. Segment B4 would be totally unacceptable, as it would impact significant sandhill habitats located in sections 3, 34, 27, and further north. Continue on A4. A portion of this would have to be shifted to the west, however, to avoid a Natural Area Registry Site located in the southeast quarter of Section 35, T.4N., R.7W. and the Thousand Acre Woods Nature Preserve located in Section 1, T.3N., R.7W. From this juncture, all of

the proposed routes around Washington would result in significant adverse impacts to natural resources and habitats. We request that this be explicitly addressed as planning proceeds and be presented for further review by our agency. South of Washington, proceed on B7, B7 alternate, then on to A7.

Your letter, dated 27 June 1991, states that "the study will also prepare an overview of the potential environmental impacts of any proposed improvements. Included in the study will be an evaluation of potential improvements to existing S.R. 57....as an alternative to constructing an entirely new roadway." Our agency would like to review the study when it becomes available, as the use of S.R. 57 has the potential to result in fewer impacts to our state's natural resources than any of the alternatives presented for Segment II.

We appreciate this opportunity to be of service and apologize for not being able to respond to your inquiries sooner on this matter. If we can be of further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact Steve Jose at (317) 232-4070.

Sincerely,

Patrick R. Ralston, Director Department of Natural Resources

PRR:SHJ

cc: Mr. James Juricic, Indiana Department of Transportation, Indianapolis, IN U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Bloomington, IN

included bur oak (Quercus macrocarpa), swamp white oak (Q. bicolor), white ash (Fraxinus americana), shellbark hickory (Carya laciniosa), pawpaw (Asimina triloba), and spicebush (Lindera benzoin). No flora and fauna are known to be restricted to the region. Typical streams are low-gradient, silty and shallowly entrenched, e.g. Maumee River.

Region Seven-Southwestern Lowlands Natural Region

This region, which is characterized by low relief and extensive aggraded valleys, includes the area bounded in Indiana by the Shawnee Hills Natural Region to the east, the Wisconsinan glacial border to the north, the Southern Bottomlands Natural Region (along the Ohio River) to the south, and the Wabash River (north of Vincennes) to the west. Similar terrain occurs across the Wabash and Ohio Rivers in Illinois and Kentucky. Much of the region is nearly level, undissected, and poorly drained, although in several areas the topography is hilly and well drained. This region, except for the southern portion, was glaciated by the Illinoian ice sheet. The region is divided into three sections: the Plainville Sand Section, the Glaciated Section, and the Driftless Section. The extant natural communities are mostly forest types, although barrens were formerly dominant in the Plainville Sand Section, and large areas of prairie occurred in the Glaciated Section. All of this region occurs in the Wabash Lowland physiographic region of Malott (45).

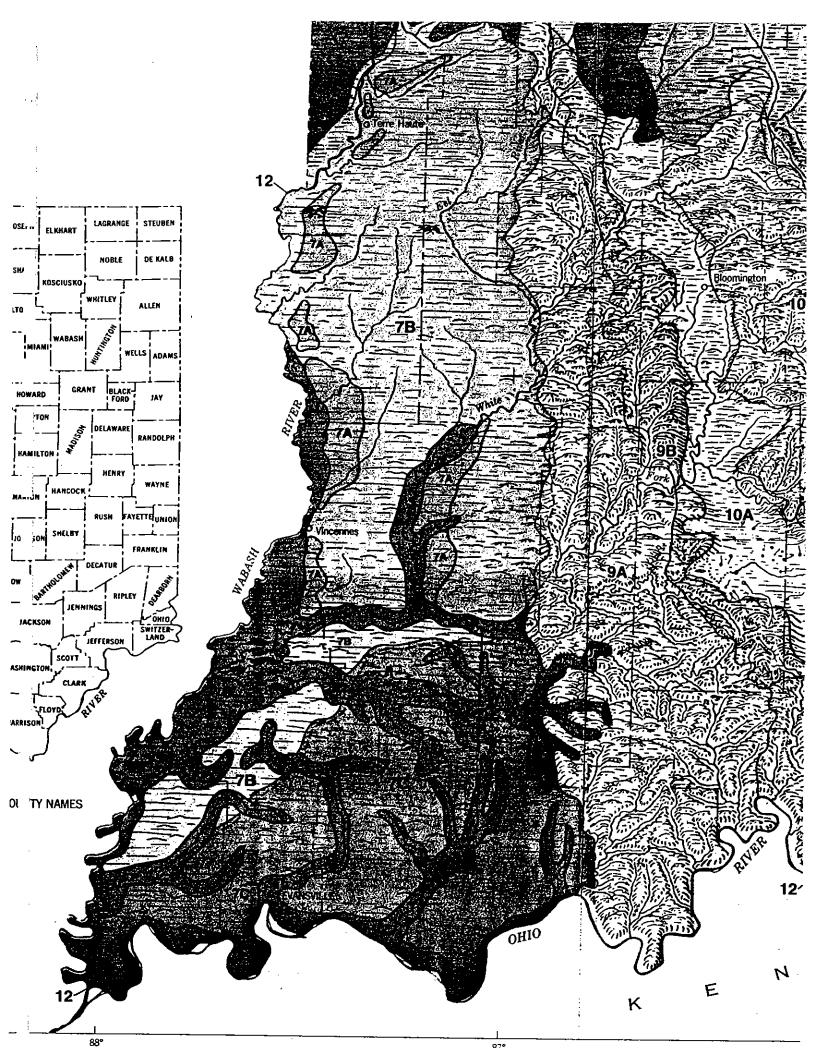
Ecological studies in the region include Lawlis (39), Lindsey (40), Ridgway (68), McCoy (46), Schneck (70), Homoya (34), Aldrich and Homoya (4), and Green (32).

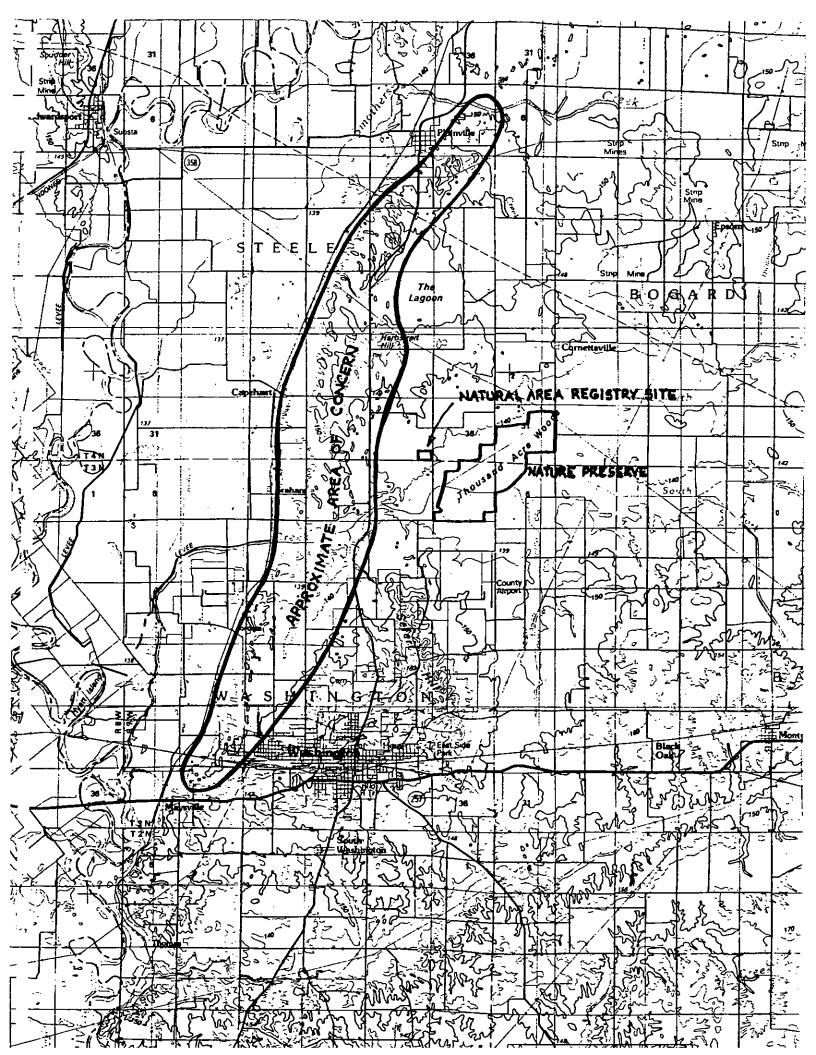
Section 7A-Plainville Sand Section

The Plainville Sand Section is a small but unique area of colian sand dunes east of the Wabash River and the White River. The sandy, acid soils are mostly in the Princeton, Bloomfield, and Ayrshire series. The barrens natural community type, now virtually gone from the landscape, was predominant on the ridges and well drained sites, and swamp, marsh, and wet prairie occupied the swales (29). The barrens vegetation consisted mostly of prairie species, along with a collection of sand dwelling species of western and southern affinities, including beard grass (Gymnopogon ambiguus), Carolina anemone (Anemone caroliniana), tube penstemon (Penstemon tubaeflorus), clustered poppy-mallow (Callirhoe triangulata), hairy golden-aster (Chrysopsis villosa), narrowleaf dayflower (Commelina angustifolia), black hickory (Carya texana), sand hickory (C. pallida), androsace (Androsace occidentalis), rose gentian (Sabatia campanulata), sedge (Carex gravida), and fleabane (Erigeron pusillus). In a few degraded remnants, one can still observe barrens vegetation, including little bluestem (Andropogon scoparius), big bluestem (A. gerardi), Indian grass (Sorghastrum nutans), side-oats grama (Bouteloua curtipendula), New Jersey tea (Ceanothus americanus), and blackjack oak (Quercus marilandica). These areas also were inhabited by a prairie fauna. Species geographically restricted here include bull snake (Pituophis melanoleucus), ornate box turtle (Terrapene ornata), and six-lined racerunner (Cnemidophorus sexlineatus). The biota of this section are similar to those of the Kankakee Sand Section of the Grand Prairie Natural Region.

Section 7B-Glaciated Section

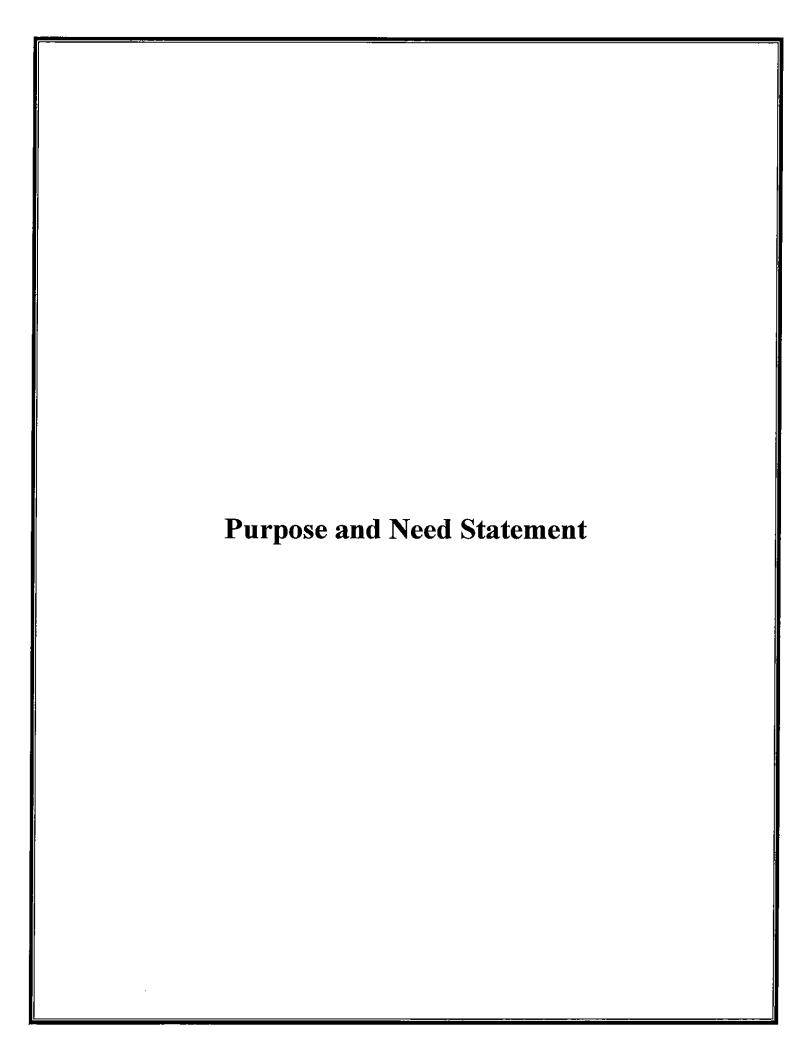
This section coincides with the Illinoian till plain of southwestern Indiana. The soils are predominantly acid to neutral silt loams with a thick layer of loess, typically the Iva, Cinncinati, Avon, Vigo, and Alford series. Natural communities are mostly forest types, but several types of former prairie are known. The flatwoods community type is common, but it is of different composition than the flatwoods in the Driftless





STATE LISTED SPECIES ASSOCIATED WITH PLAINVILLE SAND NATURAL REGION

Taxidea taxus	badger	state threatened
Terrapene ornata	ornate box turtle	special concern
Gymnopogon ambiguus	broadleaf beardgrass	extirpated
Penstemmon tubaeflorus	tube penstemmon	extirpated
Sabatia campanulata	slender marsh pink	extirpated
Carya pallida	sand hickory	state endangered
Androsace occidentalis	western rockjasmine	state endangered
Fimbristylis caroliniana	Carolina fimbry	state endangered
Gaura filipes	slender-stalked gaura	state endangered
Hypericum denticulatum	coppery St. John's-wort	state endangered
Rhexia mariana	Maryland meadow beauty	state endangered
Chrysopsis villosa	hairy golden-aster	state threatened
Galactia volubilis mississippie	ensis eastern milk-pea	state threatened
Rudbeckia fulgida	orange coneflower	state threatened
Liatris squarrosa	scaly gay feather	state rare





Commander
Eighth Coast Guard District

1222 Spruce Street St. Louis, MO 63103-2832 Staff Symbol: obr Phone: (314) 539-3900, Ext 382 FAX: (314) 539-3755

16593.22 11 July 2001

Mr. Michael Grovak
Project Manager
Bernardin, Lochmueller & Associates, Inc.
6200 Vogel Road
Evansville, IN 47715-4006

Subj: DRAFT PURPOSE AND NEED STATEMENT FOR THE I

INDIANAPOLIS STUDY

Dear Mr. Grovak:

Please refer to your letter of June 20, 2001. After reviewing the Purpose and Need presentation that you submitted we have determined that this project does not cross waterways over which the Coast Guard exercises jurisdiction for bridge administration purposes.

I appreciate the opportunity to comment on the proposed improvement project. Should you have any questions, contact Mr. David Orzechowski at (314) 539-3900 Ext. 382.

Sincerely,

ROGER K. WIEBUSCH

Bridge Administrator

By direction of the District Commander

FAX: 317/232-0693 dispo@disp.secs.in.us

Division of Historic Preservation

and Archaeology 402 W, Washington Street, W274 Indenapolis, IN 46204-2748 PH; 317/232-1646



Indiana Department of Natural Resources

RECEIVED

November 29, 2000

DEC 0 4 2000

BLA

Michael B. Grovak
Project Manager
Bernardin, Lochmueller & Associates, Inc.
6200 Vogel Road
Evansville, Indiana 47715-4006

Federal Agency: Federal Highway Administration ("FHWA")

Re: The purpose and need discussion paper for the I-69, Evansville to Indianapolis study

Dear Mr. Groyak:

Pursuant to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (16 U.S.C. § 470f) and 36 C.F.R. Part 800, the Indiana State Historic Preservation Officer ("Indiana SHPO") has conducted an analysis of the materials dated September 13, 2000, and received by the Indiana SHPO on October 31, 2000, for the above indicated project in southwestern Indiana.

Thank you for providing us with a copy of your purpose and need paper. Be advised that in addition to carrying out appropriate steps for NEPA compliance, you will need to carry out certain responsibilities pursuant to 36 C.F.R. Part 800 for the Section 106 review process, because Federal finds will be used for the project. A copy of the revised 36 C.F.R. § 800 that went into effect on June 17, 1999, may be found on the Internet at www.achp.gov for your reference. Also, enclosed for your reference are some handouts describing some of important information when consulting with the Indiana SHPO.

If you have questions about our comments, please call our office at (317) 232-1646.

Yery maly yours,

Larry D. Macklin

State Historic Preservation Officer

LDM:MDF:mdf

Enclosures

cc: John Baxter, Federal Highway Administration Steve Jose, Division of Fish & Wildlife, Indiana Department of Natural Resources

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United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

BLOOMINGTON FIELD OFFICE (ES)
620 South Walker Street
Bloomington, IN 47403-2121
(812) 334-4261 FAX (812) 334-4273
October 16, 2000

Michael B. Grovak Bernardin, Lochmueller & Associates, Inc. P.O. Box 2821 West Lafayette, Indiana 47906

Dear Mr. Grovak:

This responds to your letter, dated September 13, 2000, requesting U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) comments on the Purpose and Need Discussion Paper for I-69, Evansville to Indianapolis Study.

These comments have been prepared under the authority of the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act (16 U.S.C. 661 et. seq.) and are consistent with the intent of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, the Endangered Species Act of 1973, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Mitigation Policy.

Having reviewed the Purpose and Need Discussion Paper, we are concerned that the Draft Statement of Purpose will bias the study process towards selection of certain routes. As we noted in our letter of February 10, 2000 to the Federal Highway Administration, we believe that the "big picture" approach of the tiered EIS will increase the difficulty in adequately and fairly assessing all alternatives. Therefore, we feel that it is absolutely critical to begin the process with an unbiased Statement of Purpose. We believe that the Statement of Purpose should be simplified to read as follows: "The purpose of the I-69/Evansville-to-Indianapolis Project is to improve the transportation linkage between Evansville and Indianapolis."

If a "build" alternative is selected, then by definition the transportation network has been strengthened, and presumably, economic development would be supported. Therefore, singling out the transportation network and economic development specifically of Southwestern Indiana biases the study against alternate routes that would fulfill the basic purpose of the project, which is to improve the linkage between Evansville and Indianapolis. As you state in the Discussion Paper, the legal definition of Corridor 18 within Indiana is to provide a link connecting Evansville and Indianapolis; therefore, all alternate routes that accomplish this goal should be equally and fairly considered without prior bias. We also feel that economic needs as well as benefits/losses must be considered for all alternate routes in order to fairly compare all the alternatives.

2.

Within the three larger categories of transportation, economics and Corridor 18, you have identified 10 issues for analysis and factors to consider within those issues. We are highly concerned that minimizing environmental impacts was not identified as an issue or even as a factor to consider. Certainly, environmental impacts must be a factor to consider in assessing and selecting a transportation route; they must also be considered in any economic benefit/cost analysis, especially if negative environmental impacts may result in economic losses. Minimizing environmental impacts should be considered as an issue for analysis.

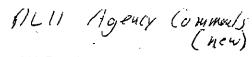
We appreciate the opportunity to comment at this stage of project planning. If you have any questions about our comments, please call Barbara Hosler at (812) 334-4261 ext. 209.

Sincerely yours,

Michael

Scott E. Pruitt
Acting Supervisor

cc: Cristine Klika, Commissioner, INDOT, Indianapolis, IN
Lawrence Heil, Federal Highway Administration, Indianapolis, IN
Director, IDNR, Division of Fish & Wildlife, Indianapolis, IN
Andrew Pelloso, IDEM, Water Quality Standards Section, Indianapolis, IN
Michael MacMullen, USEPA, Region 5, Chicago, IL





United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest Service Hoosier National Forest

811 Constitution Ave Bedford, IN 47421 Phone: 812-275-5987 FAX: 812-279-3423

TDD: 812-275-7817

File Code: 1950

Date: October 10, 2000

Bernardin - Lochmueller & Associates, Inc. P.O. Box 2821
West Lafayette, IN 47906

Re: Project No. 199-0001-0PL-PL35.

RECEIVED OCT 1 6 2000

) Dear Mr. Grovak:

Thank you for sending a copy of the Purpose and Need Discussion Paper for the I-69, Evansville to Indianapolis Study. I admire the well thought out process for developing the purpose and need. I hope that by conducting such substantial analysis before developing the environmental impact statement it will result in a effective streamlined process.

The economic benefits of an interstate highway between Evansville and Indianapolis are considered in ten issues discussed in your paper. I encourage you to consider adding environmental criteria to attain the widest range of beneficial uses of the environment without degradation of natural aspects as envisioned by section 101(b) of the National Environmental Policy Act. Perhaps, the environmental factors would be to minimize the number of acres of farmland, forest, and wetland, converted to highway right-of-way.

If I can be of any further assistance, please let me know.

Sincerely,

KENNETH G. DAY Forest Supervisor